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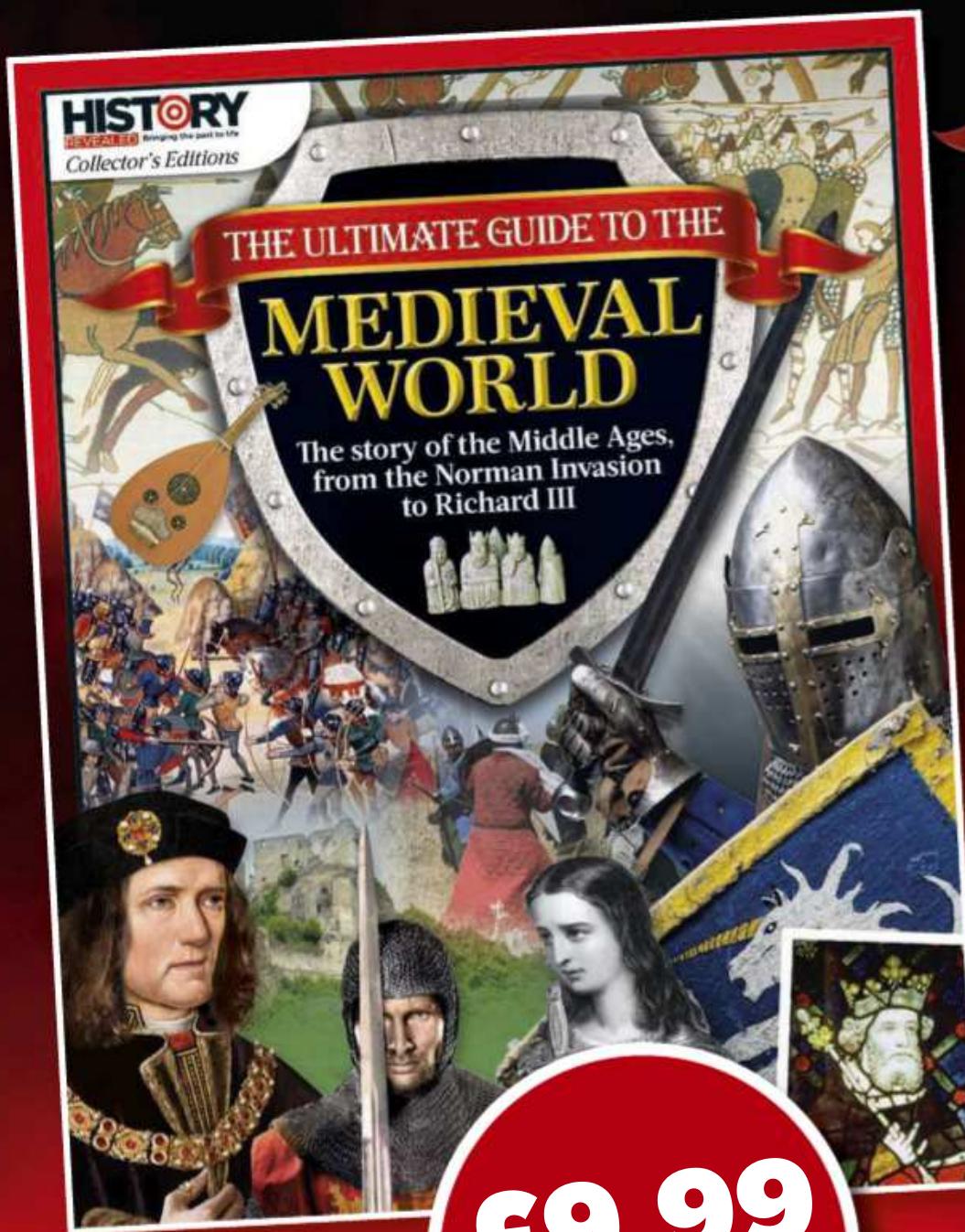
THE TUDORS

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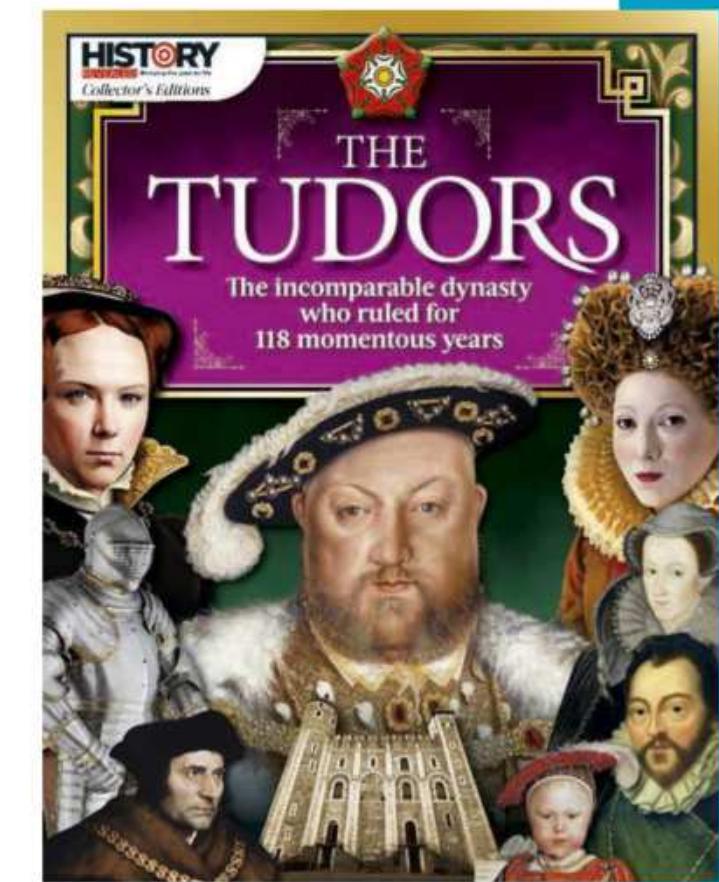
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Welcome



Richard III's army greatly outnumbered that of **Henry Tudor** on Bosworth Field in Leicestershire on 22nd August 1485. **The Wars of the Roses** had been raging for over 30 years, but by the end of the day, **Richard III lay dead**, and the lengthy series of wars was all over bar the shouting. In October that year, Henry VII was crowned king at Westminster Abbey, the **last king of England to win the crown in battle** and the first monarch in the Tudor Dynasty.

Henry Tudor's son, **Henry VIII would become legendary** for his many wives and quest to produce a male heir, just as he would become infamous for breaking with the Pope in Rome. His children would rule as **Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I**, by which time England would be established as one of Europe's greatest powers.

But who were these people whose reigns were often terrifying, and who **executed thousands of their subjects**? What motivated them, and how did they respond to the changing times in which they lived? Our expert guide to **the most spellbinding of royal dynasties** has all the answers.

Don't forget we have more Tudor tales and other great history stories every month – why not turn to **page 20 for details of how to subscribe to the magazine?**

Paul McGuinness

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THE TUDORS

Who were the Tudors, and what was life like during their 118-year reign?

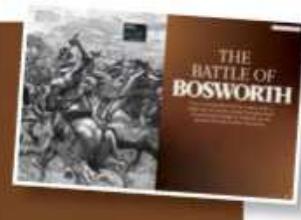
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THE BATTLE OF BOSWORTH

When Henry Tudor defeated Richard III, he ended the Wars of the Roses, and became the first Tudor King

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The epic life and times of England's most famous king

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HENRY VIII'S WEDDINGS

The King's six wives defined his reign

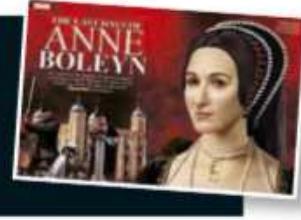
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THE LAST DAYS OF ANNE BOLEYN

Was the Queen guilty or innocent

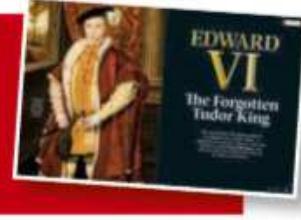
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EDWARD VI: THE FORGOTTEN KING

The boy-king's reign was short but eventful

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Who was the bloodiest Tudor monarch?

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Uncover the real woman who wore the crown

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THE SPANISH ARMADA

How this defining moment in English history owed much to chance

90



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Explore more great
stories every month

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POSITION OF POWER
Henry VIII is one of history's best-known characters. His 37-year reign saw some of England's biggest changes, including the creation of the Church of England

LIVING WITH THE TUDORS

More than 400 years have passed since the death of the last Tudor monarch, yet our fascination with the dynasty shows no sign of abating, and Tudor history continues to reign on our TV screens. From the imposing figures of Henry VIII and the Virgin Queen, to the dirt and hardship of the streets, it seems we can't get enough of our Tudor forbears.

The 117-year period was one of immense change, full of larger-than-life characters, when the rich lived a life of luxury and comfort, and the poor scraped a living as best they could. But danger lurked around every corner – from religious persecution and foreign invasion, to death from disease, poverty... or the executioner's blade.



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NEED TO KNOW

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TIMELINE

The highs and lows of the Tudor Dynasty p18

**WESTMINSTER
ABBEY**

All of the Tudor monarchs were **crowned** in Westminster Abbey. The coronation of Elizabeth I in 1559 marked a change to the service as, for the first time, **English** was **introduced** to the previously all-Latin ceremony

THE RULERS & THE RULED

Find out how one family created the nation we know today

TURN THE PAGE





THE THAMES

As the largest port in the country, **London relied on the Thames** for communication, trade, drainage and water supply. Its waters supported a thriving fish supply and **walruses** were reportedly found in the river up to 1456!

TUDOR METROPOLIS
Tudor London – seen here in the 2011 film *Anonymous* – was England's largest city and it grew fast. In the century between 1500 and 1600 its population quadrupled from c50,000 to c215,000

Henry VIII

Larger than life

The second monarch of the Tudor dynasty, Henry VIII was never supposed to rule, but became heir after the death of his brother, Arthur, in 1502.

Although best-known for his frequent marriages – all six of them! – Henry was also a keen patron of the arts, the founder of the Royal Navy, and was responsible for the formation of the Church of England. His near-40-year reign also saw the establishment of the Kingdom of Ireland and a remodelling of the country's government and taxation processes.

Henry began his reign as a golden king – handsome, educated, sporty and young. But by the end of his life, his extravagant lifestyle had taken its toll and he was crippled by gout and ill health. Nonetheless, he remains one of England's most infamous monarchs.



52

Henry's waist measurement (in inches) during the last few years of his life

**TILL ANNULMENT
US DO PART**
Henry VIII and probably
his least favourite wife,
Anne of Cleves

1

...and his wives

1. CATHERINE OF ARAGON

MARRIAGE ANNULLED

Henry's former sister-in-law, Catherine was finally set aside after Henry's break with Rome.



2. ANNE BOLEYN

BEHEADED

Charged with incest, adultery and high treason, Anne was killed after three years of marriage.



3. JANE SEYMOUR

DIED

Married 11 days after Anne's death, Jane died soon after the birth of the future Edward VI.



4. ANNE OF CLEVES

MARRIAGE ANNULLED

Henry annulled the marriage after just six months, citing non-consummation.



5. CATHERINE HOWARD

BEHEADED

Some 30 years Henry's junior, Catherine was executed for adultery, aged 20.



6. CATHERINE PARR

WIDOWED

Catherine reconciled Henry with his daughters Elizabeth and Mary but bore him no children.

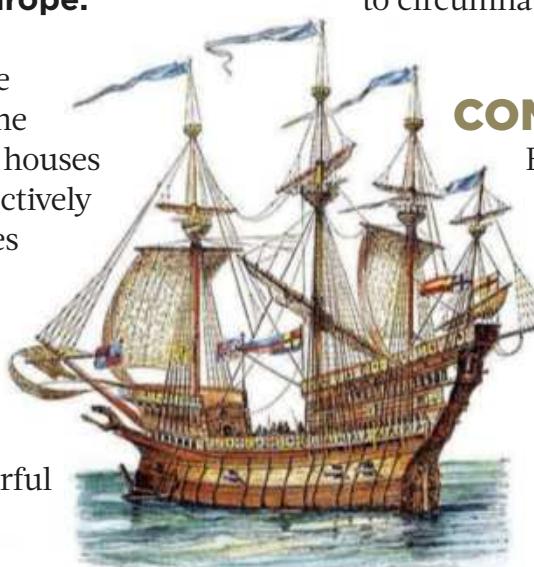


THE FAMILY WHO SHAPED BRITAIN

From religion and trade, to exploration and discovery, the Tudor dynasty paved the way to the Britain we know today

The Tudor period was an era of great change and one that saw England develop into one of the leading European colonial powers. But it was also a time of immense turbulence that not only affected the country itself, but sent shock waves through Europe.

When Henry Tudor won the throne of England in 1485, he had successfully united the houses of Lancaster and York – effectively ending the Wars of the Roses – but the dynasty he had begun was far from secure. Yet, within 130 years, England was well on its way to becoming one of the most wealthy and powerful nations in the world.



The 16th century was a great age of exploration that saw traditional views of the world change dramatically. John Cabot awakened the world to the existence of the continent of North America in 1497 and, a little over 80 years later, Sir Francis Drake became the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe.

COMMERCIAL GROWTH

By the end of the period, England had cast her trading net all over the world – from North Africa to the East Indies. Colonies were being founded in the Americas and luxury goods

BATTLE SHIPS

Henry Grace à Dieu, built from 1512-14, was the first warship of Henry VIII's Royal Navy

such as sugar, tobacco and spices were being brought back to the country.

AT HOME

But it wasn't just abroad that the Tudors made their mark – there were also huge changes across the British Isles. Henry VIII created the new Church of England, which gave the country religious independence from Rome. The Royal Navy was also developed, and it not only kept England's shores safe from foreign attack (countries such as Spain and France posed a likely threat), it paved the way to British dominance of the seas during the 18th century.

The Tudor dynasty accomplished massive changes in a relatively short space of time, transforming England from a war-torn country into one of the leading powers of the world. In doing so, this family of colourful characters did much to shape the Britain we know today.

Elizabeth I

The 'Virgin Queen'

The only child of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth was England's last Tudor monarch. She was determined to rule as Queen in her own right, and it is this that she is often remembered for.

Sometimes described as a 'golden age', Elizabeth's reign saw many great advancements. England's territories expanded overseas thanks to explorers like Sir Francis Drake, its culture scene exploded producing writers such as Shakespeare, and the country returned to the Protestant faith, while allowing some of the old Catholic traditions to continue.

Famously describing herself as having "the body of a weak and feeble woman" but the "heart of a king", image was incredibly important to Elizabeth. She went to enormous lengths to maintain an image of a youthful, yet powerful, virgin queen.

...and her suitors

An unmarried queen was a problem, but finding a suitable match could be a political and religious nightmare. Elizabeth entertained many suitors during her reign - among them Philip II of Spain - but her favourite was childhood friend Robert Dudley. The full extent of their relationship is still debated today.



ROYAL ROMANCE?
In the 1998 film *Elizabeth*, Robert Dudley and Elizabeth have a secret affair

MOTHER ENGLAND
Dripping in jewellery, and appearing much younger than she would have been, George Gower's portrait of the Virgin Queen shows off her wealth and femininity



ELIZABETH THE WARRIOR

DEFEATING THE SPANISH ARMADA

The threat of invasion from Spain was a permanent dark cloud during Elizabeth's reign, as Philip II (Spain's king and the widower of Mary I) sought, among other things, to bring England under Spanish Catholic rule and control trade and expansion in the Americas. In 1588, Philip launched an armada of an estimated 122 ships. His fleet was met in the Channel by an English fleet under the command of Sir Francis Drake - who allegedly decided to finish a game of bowls before leaping into action! After eight days of battling, the English sent fireships toward the anchored Spanish fleet, causing them to panic and flee. After the final battle, what remained of Spain's fleet limped home, broken and defeated.



The other Tudor monarchs

HENRY VII

REIGN: 24 YEARS

Having defeated Richard III at Bosworth in 1485, Henry married Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV, and together they founded the Tudor dynasty. His reign was plagued by plots and conspiracies and his hold on the crown was shaky.



EDWARD VI

REIGN: 6 YEARS

The only legitimate son of Henry VIII, Edward became King in 1547, aged nine. Under the control of his uncle, Edward Seymour, who declared himself protector, Edward's rule saw the introduction of a Protestant English Prayer Book, which resulted in widespread unrest and rebellion.



MARY I

REIGN: 5 YEARS

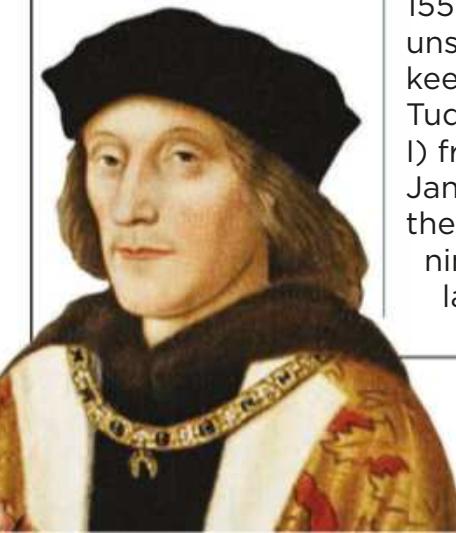
Daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, Mary was effectively bastardised after the annulment of her parents' marriage but was later reinstated as heir. Her resolve to restore Catholicism saw hundreds of Protestants burned at the stake.

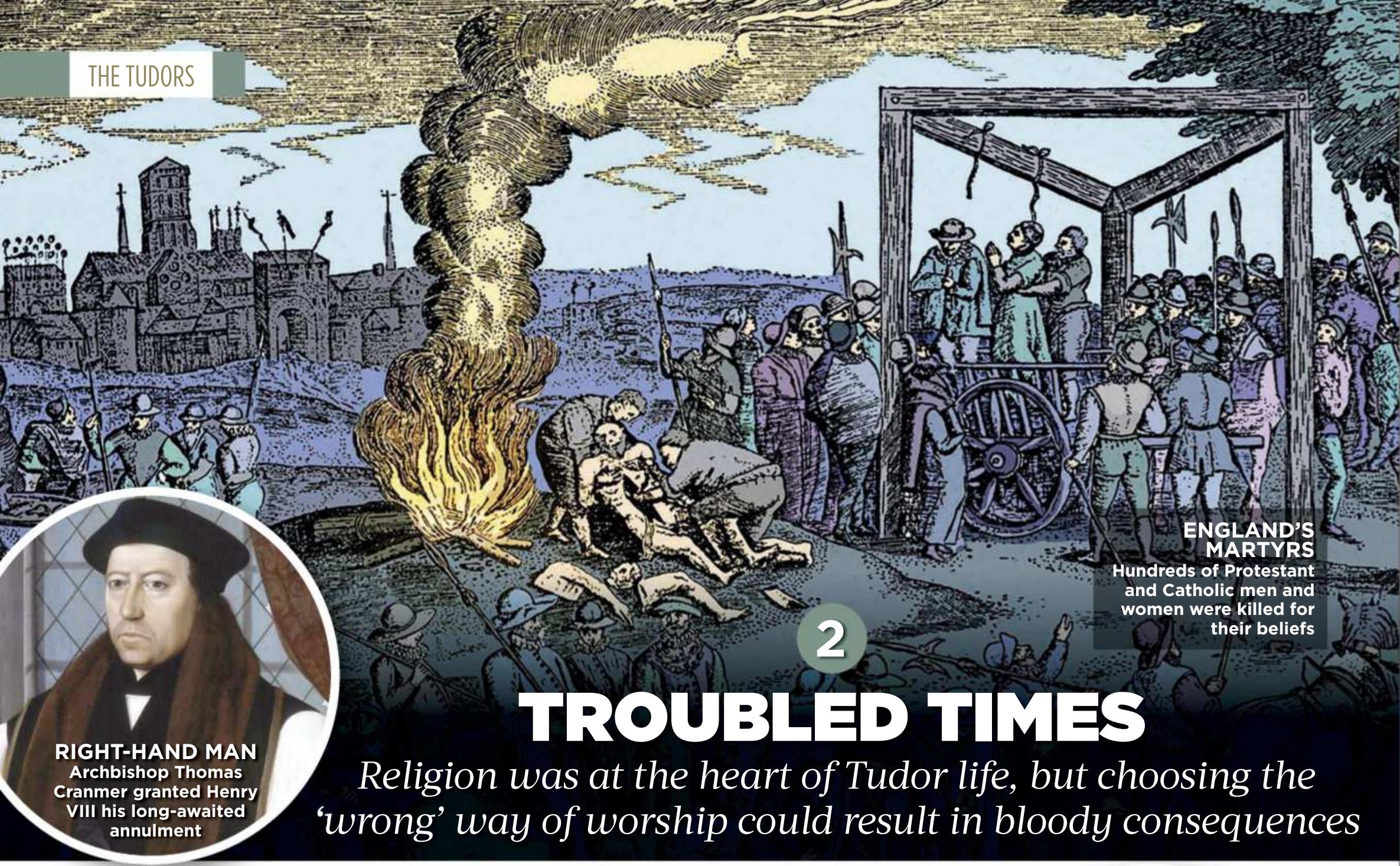


LADY JANE GREY

REIGN: 9 DAYS

The great-granddaughter of Henry VII, Jane was officially pronounced Queen of England in 1553, as part of an unsuccessful bid to keep Catholic Mary Tudor (later Mary I) from the throne. Jane relinquished the crown after nine days but was later beheaded.





RIGHT-HAND MAN
Archbishop Thomas Cranmer granted Henry VIII his long-awaited annulment

ENGLAND'S MARTYRS

Hundreds of Protestant and Catholic men and women were killed for their beliefs

2

TROUBLED TIMES

Religion was at the heart of Tudor life, but choosing the 'wrong' way of worship could result in bloody consequences

For nearly 1,000 years, religion in England adhered to the teachings of the Catholic church, led by the Pope in Rome. But by the 16th century, challenges were being made to the authority – and greed – of the Catholic church, starting in 1517 with a German monk named Martin Luther.

The criticisms and ideas preached by Luther and his followers (known as Protestants because they were protesting against the Pope) spread throughout Europe, but it wasn't until the 1530s, during the reign of Henry VIII, that England felt its impact.

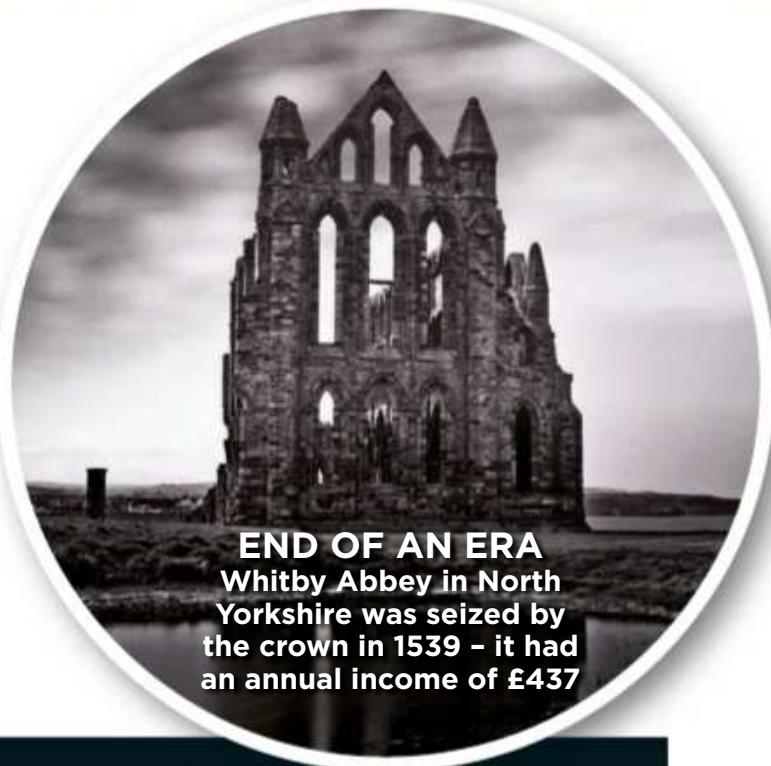
Convinced that he would never sire a son while he remained married to Catherine of Aragon, and angered by the Pope's refusal to annul the union, Henry took advantage of the ongoing religious debates and made himself head of a new form of Christianity – the Church of England. No longer answerable to the Pope, but still a devout Catholic, Henry's marriage was declared invalid by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and he was free to marry Anne Boleyn.

But Henry's decision in 1536 to dissolve the monasteries and divert their wealth to the crown was not popular, and 40,000 armed men gathered in Yorkshire to protest against the religious reforms – known as the 'Pilgrimage of Grace'.

Edward VI continued on his father's Protestant path, introducing an English Book of Common Prayer, and destroying Catholic paraphernalia. Edward's sister, Mary I, however, spent her reign trying to restore Catholicism to the country, reinstating Catholic doctrines and rites, replacing altars and burning some 300 men and women who refused to accept the return to the Catholic faith.

By the time Elizabeth I ascended the throne, England was in dire need of some religious stability. A 'middle way' was established that allowed some elements of Catholicism whilst retaining the Protestant religion.

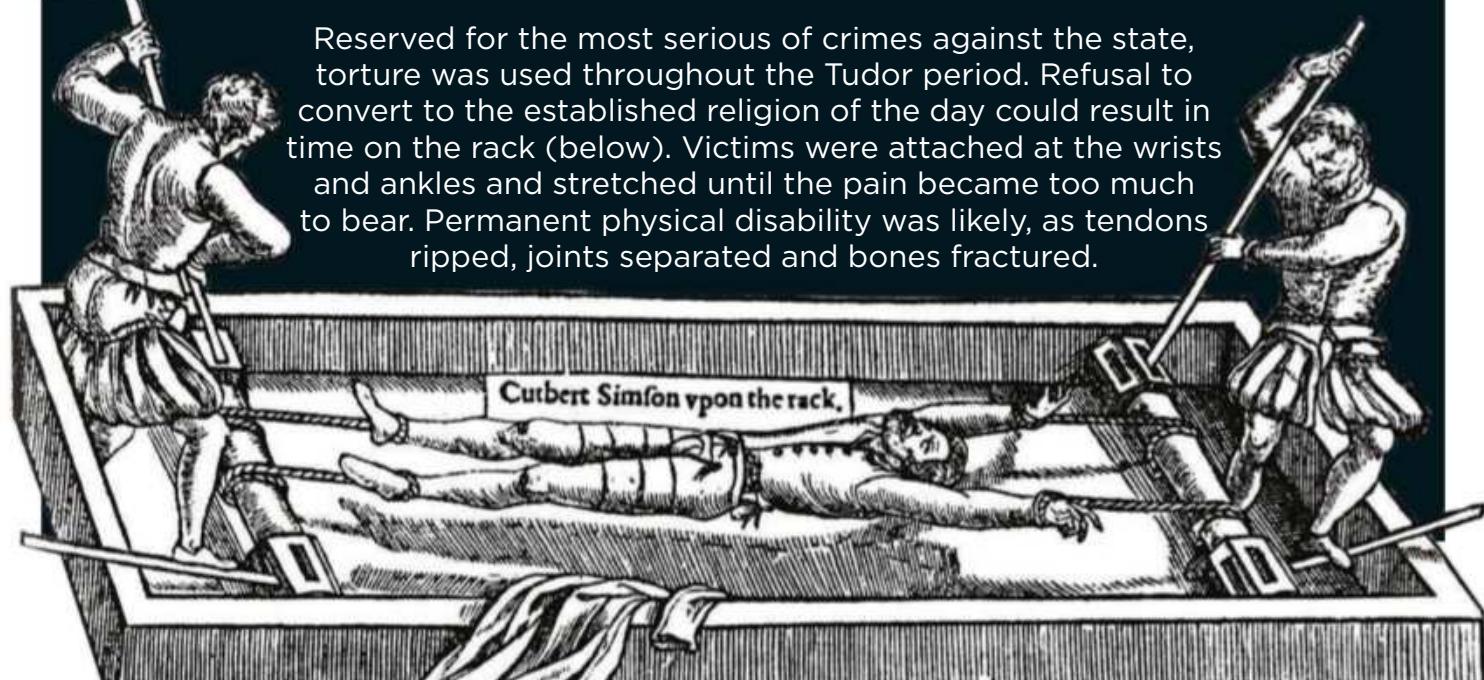
800
The number of monasteries whose wealth was seized by Henry VIII – if not more



END OF AN ERA
Whitby Abbey in North Yorkshire was seized by the crown in 1539 – it had an annual income of £437

TOOLS OF TORTURE THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS

Reserved for the most serious of crimes against the state, torture was used throughout the Tudor period. Refusal to convert to the established religion of the day could result in time on the rack (below). Victims were attached at the wrists and ankles and stretched until the pain became too much to bear. Permanent physical disability was likely, as tendons ripped, joints separated and bones fractured.

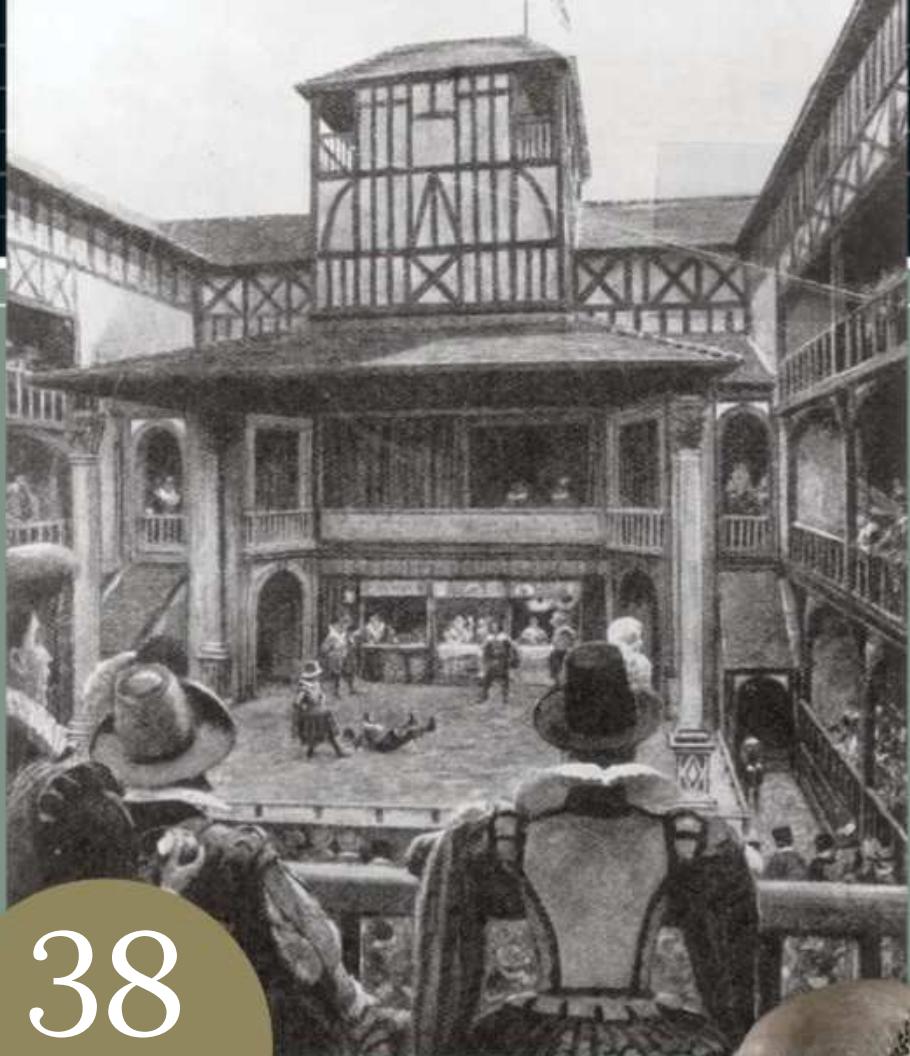


PLAYING FOR THE PUBLIC

London's Fortune Theatre, built c1600, boasted a rectangular thrust stage covered by a roof, and a dressing room

FESTIVITIES AT THE THEATRE

Britain's first permanent playhouses were built during the Tudor period, but theatre's boom came during Elizabeth I's reign when works by playwrights such as William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe were in high demand. Companies performed 30-40 new plays every year, with all parts (including women's) played by men. Playhouses such as the Globe could hold 3,000 people. A small fee would get a standing place in the pit under an open roof. The best seats were above the stage itself or in the covered gallery.

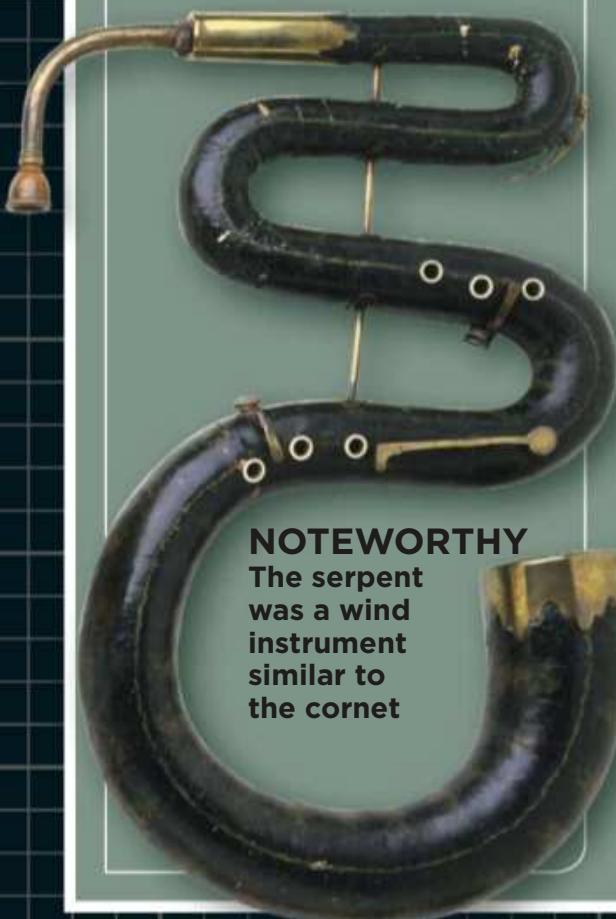


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The number of plays that William Shakespeare wrote

IN HARMONY MELODY MAKERS

Music during the Elizabethan period saw a shift from sacred to secular, and musical instruments played a far greater role than they had done previously. Bands of musicians known as waites could be found in most towns and cities. Dating back to the medieval period, waites usually played woodwind instruments such as the shawm - a predecessor of the modern oboe.



NOTEWORTHY
The serpent was a wind instrument similar to the cornet

3

WORK, REST AND PLAY

Life in Tudor England could be hard, and even dangerous, but there was still time to have fun

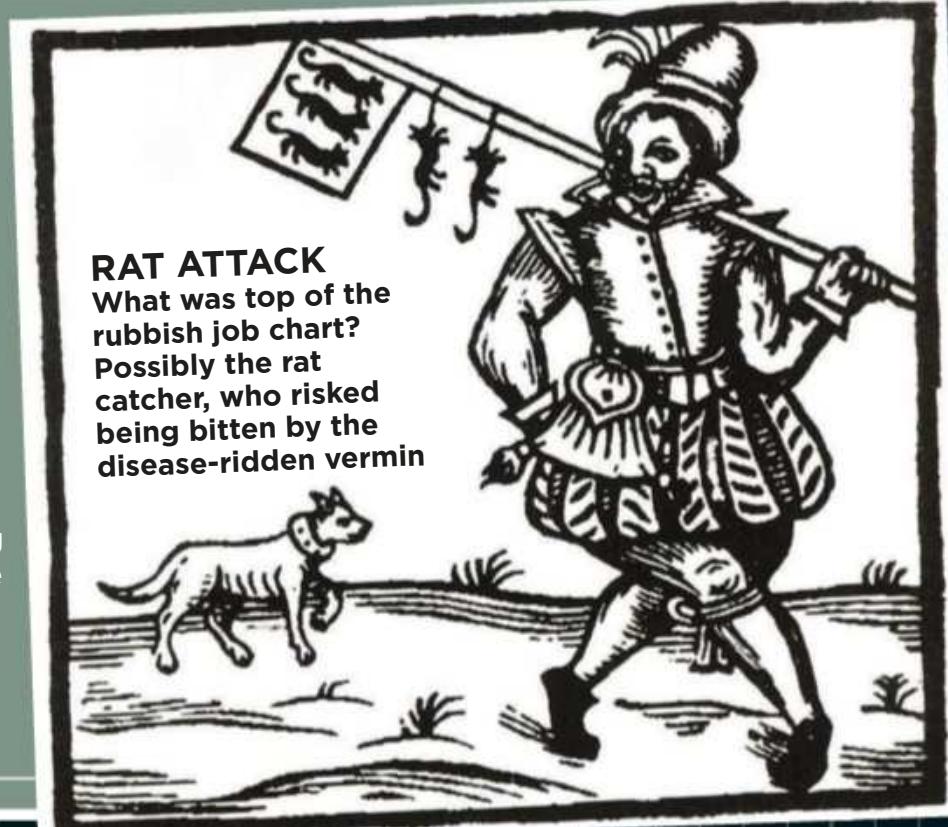
The working day was a long one, beginning early and ending late, often six days a week. For those in work, a regular wage enabled them to feed themselves and their families, but a rapid rise in population levels during the 16th century saw thousands driven to begging on the streets. Entertainment offered ordinary Tudors respite from the daily grind - everything from football to theatre was popular.



EMPLOYMENT JOBS COULD STINK

If you were lucky enough to be offered an apprenticeship at 14 years old, you could eventually earn a living as a weaver, mason, tailor or blacksmith, although you wouldn't actually qualify, or earn a proper wage, until the age of 21.

But other Tudor jobs were not as sought after. That of the gong farmer - who cleared human waste from cesspits and privies - was surely one of the worst. Although well paid for their services, gong farmers could only work at night and were only permitted to live in outlying areas - for obvious reasons! Woad dyers had to live on the outskirts of cities: the stench created by the process used to extract blue dye from woad plants was awful.



RAT ATTACK
What was top of the rubbish job chart? Possibly the rat catcher, who risked being bitten by the disease-ridden vermin

SPORTS A 'BEAUTIFUL GAME'?

Football was enjoyed by all classes but was very different to the game we know today. There was no limit to the number of players, goalposts could be as far as a mile apart, and the ball was often an inflated pig bladder. And it was dangerous. One coroner's report from the 16th century tells of two men who were accidentally stabbed while tackling an opponent.

Bear-baiting and cock-fighting were also popular across society. Elizabeth I is known to have watched, and enjoyed, such entertainments.



GAME AROUND
TOP LEFT: The world's oldest football dates from c1540 - it's made of leather and pig's bladder
ABOVE: Bear- and bull-baiting drew large crowds

COURTLY BEHAVIOUR

MIND THY MANNERS

A list of 79 rules to be followed by Henry VIII's court was written in 1526:

"There be no manner of playing at diffe or cards, ufed within the fame chamber..."

Playing dice or cards in the King's rooms was prohibited unless he was present.

"...fuch perfans as be appointed of the privy chamber, fhall be loving together, and of good unity and accord keeping fecret all fuch things as fhall be done or faid in the fame..."

Access to the King's private quarters was reserved for the most trusted members of the King's household.

"No person... to keep any grey-hounds, maftrives, hounds or dogs in the court other than som few small spaniells for ladyes"

Most dogs were banned at court to help keep it clean.

Life at the Tudor court was all about excess, a place where marriages were brokered, fashions were set, wealth was flaunted and reputations made or destroyed. It was the centre of power, presided over by the monarch and his or her closest advisors, and attended by those who wished to get close to the ruler.

PRACTICALITIES

Catering for the hundreds of people who attended court (around 1,000 in the case of Henry VIII) was no mean feat, and some 200 kitchen staff were required to provide meals of up to 14 courses for the court. In a typical year, the royal kitchen could serve 33,000 chickens, 8,200 sheep, 1,240 oxen, 24,000 larks, 53 wild boar and 2,300 deer.

Roasted swan was a delicacy reserved for important banquets but Tudor cooks would sometimes use the parts of different animals to create a 'new' creature. One of

RESTORING RESPECTABILITY

Elizabeth I made the so-called **immoral dance**, *la volta*, more respectable after dancing it at court with Robert Dudley



GOLDEN GIRL

Cate Blanchett prepares to dance in the 1998 film *Elizabeth*



WHO'S THE FOOL?
Court jester Will Somer was well paid for his role

Dance was a key feature of court entertainment and was often influenced by trends seen in the royal courts of Spain, France and Italy. Dancing was viewed as an elegant form of exercise and an essential skill. One particularly risqué dance of the 16th century was *la volta*, which saw the man hold his female partner by

ENTERTAINMENT

TAKE TO THE FLOOR

the waist and lift her as she leapt high into the air – a move that could expose the lady's undergarments!

Court 'fools' were popular members of court, loved for their directness and humour. Will Somer (left), was the much-loved fool of Henry VIII, and one of the only people who could amuse the king during his periods of ill health.

these was the cockatrice, which was made by attaching the upper half of a pig to the bottom half of a capon or turkey.

FITTING IN

Assuming the role of the courtier was costly and getting a place at court could be tough without friends in high places. Expensive, well-cut clothes were essential and could also get you noticed – although not always for the right reasons. Sumptuary laws introduced by Henry VIII and Elizabeth I dictated who in Tudor England could wear what. Arriving at court in a gown of purple silk, for example, could see you fined or even imprisoned, since purple was reserved for the royal family alone.

To have the ear of the monarch was the aim of every ambitious courtier, so becoming Groom of the Stool – attending the King while he answered a call of nature – was a seen as a great privilege that often went to a high-ranking courtier.

4

LIFE AT COURT

Becoming a successful courtier required money, contacts and patience

JEWEL DRESSING

A gold-and-diamond ring such as this would have been standard attire for a lady at the court



FASHION

STATUS SYMBOLS

Personal appearance was central to court life, and fashionable clothing was one of the best ways to display wealth and status. Huge sums of money were spent on clothing: in today's money, Henry VIII is said to have spent nearly £2.4 million on clothes a year.

Fashion trends were led by the reigning monarch and new looks were quickly emulated by noble men and women. Elizabeth I was something of a fashion icon, favouring bright colours of red, gold and silver and encouraging her courtiers to embrace the lavish fashions she so loved.



MENSWEAR

THE DAWN OF THE CODPIECE

When it came to codpieces, bigger was always better. Codpieces reached the peak of their popularity during the reign of Henry VIII and were often stuffed with a padding called bombast. At times they were so large they could be used to conceal a weapon or even hide jewels.

But, much like today, fashions changed rapidly, and by late 16th century the broad-shouldered, square-shaped silhouette of the 1540s Tudor gentleman had given way to the 'three-piece suit' of doublet, jerkin and hose (stockings) of the Elizabethan period.

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

All the signs point to this woman being of significant wealth and status



FRENCH HOOD

Anne Boleyn is generally credited with introducing the French hood to England, and it was soon popular among ladies of the upper classes.

BILLIMENTS

These decorative, jewelled or pearly edges on a French hood were often designed to match the jewelled edging of a gown.

MAKE-UP

Pale complexions were associated with wealth and nobility. Elizabeth I's famous white look was created by applying a cosmetic called ceruse to her face and neck. One of its ingredients was lead, which damaged the skin and often caused hair loss.

JEWELLERY

Brooches were very popular with upper class women in the early 16th century. The scene on this brooch is that of a seated woman playing what appears to be a lute.

FABRIC

Black was a colour worn almost exclusively by the wealthy since it was hard to dye and expensive to maintain. Rich, sumptuous fabrics such as velvet, silks and satins all denoted the status of the wearer.

PRAYER BOOK

Miniature prayer books were often attached to girdle chains worn around the waist and were popular with ladies of rank. The fashion may have been introduced by Henry VIII's Spanish wife Catherine of Aragon.

CLOTHING

DRESSING DOWN



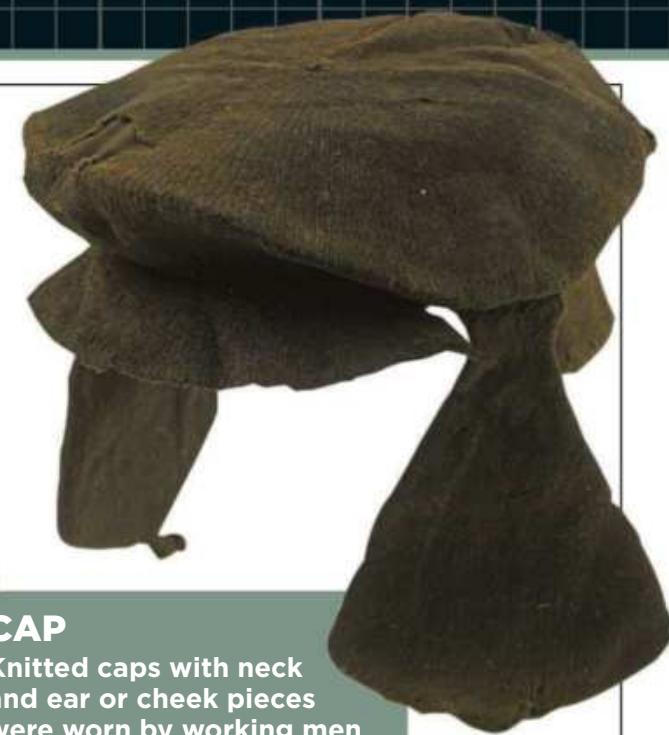
HEADDRESS FRAME

This copper frame would have been hidden beneath fabric to create the style of headdress known as a gable. All but the very poorest women covered their hair somehow



SHIRT AND BREECHES

Known as 'slops', this would have been worn by a Tudor sailor. It is stained with tar and has been heavily mended



CAP

Knitted caps with neck and ear or cheek pieces were worn by working men in London. They were made to be warm and waterproof



CHILD'S MITTEN

This hand knitted mitten was found in the Finsbury area of London. Knitting became very popular in the 16th century

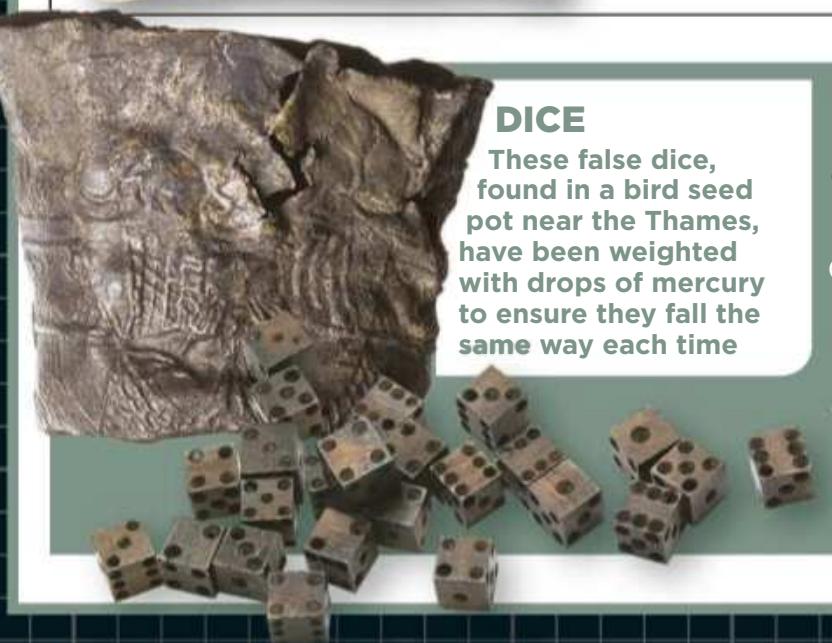
ADULT PATTEN

Part of a multi-layered leather patten. Pattens were attached to normal shoes to keep them clean while outdoors



CHILD'S VEST

Second-hand clothing dealers known as frippery dealers were often used by the poor, but many relied on home-knitted garments like this to keep their children warm



DICE

These false dice, found in a bird seed pot near the Thames, have been weighted with drops of mercury to ensure they fall the same way each time

LEISURE

TAKING TIME OUT

Gambling with dice was extremely popular in 16th-century London but was not without its risks: many fell prey to 'crooked dice' that could never win. A trip to the theatre might be a raucous affair but would only cost you a penny.

MONEY BOX

Admission fees at the theatre were collected in pots like this. The backstage room where the pots were then taken is probably where we get the term 'box office' from



FOOD & DRINK

TUCKING IN, TUDOR-STYLE

With fruit and vegetables believed by many to carry diseases, bread, meat, fish, pottages and ale formed the basis of the Tudor diet. Keeping meat fresh was a problem resolved by salting or drying it, while weak ale was drunk instead of water.

WOODEN SPOON

Forks weren't used in Tudor England. People ate with knives, spoons or used their fingers



SKIMMER

This would probably have been used to skim foam off the top of the liquid when cooking broths or boiling meat



BLACK JACK

Alehouses often offered drinks to customers in tankard-shaped leather vessels known as 'black jacks'. They were waterproof, robust and easy to carry



KNIFE

Table knives were used to cut, skewer, joint and slice meat and fish



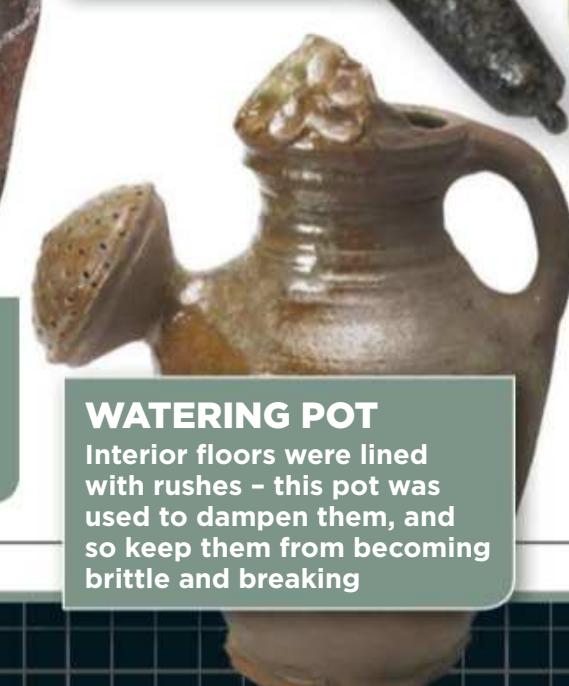
HOME

THE TUDOR FAMILY

Tudor families were generally larger than they are today, but high infant mortality rates meant many children did not survive to adulthood and many women died giving birth. Despite this, men and women did not marry especially young: the average age at marriage for a woman was 25-26.

NEEDLE CASE

With two loops, this sewing-needle case could hang from a belt



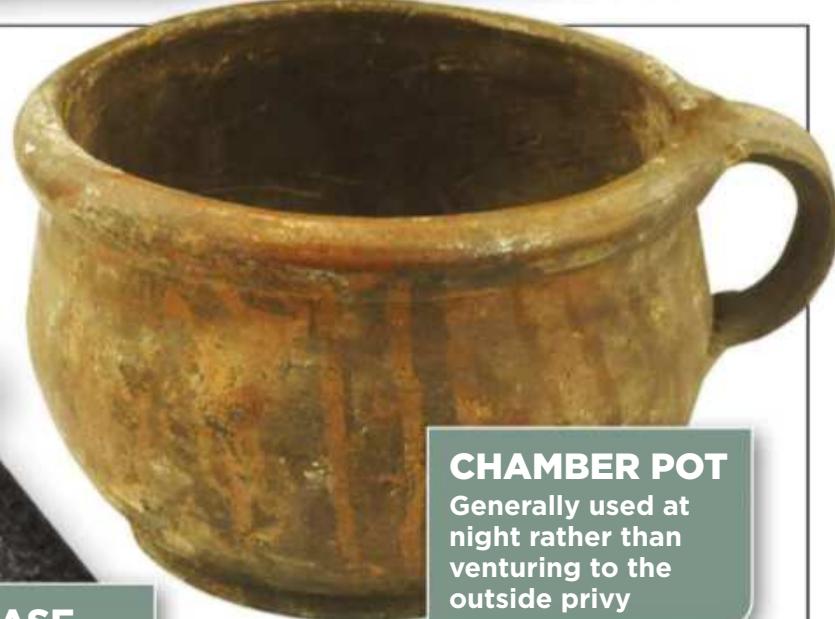
CAULDRON

Most cooking was done over an open fire so tripod feet were needed to raise the pot



WATERING POT

Interior floors were lined with rushes - this pot was used to dampen them, and so keep them from becoming brittle and breaking



CHAMBER POT

Generally used at night rather than venturing to the outside privy

FUMING POT

Used to heat herbs and spices to fumigate the home and protect it against plague and disease

INFORMER'S REPORT

The government relied on informers to maintain the law. The first entry here, written in 1557, reports on the illegal eating of a pig during Lent

1,000

The number of alehouses in London by 1613 - maybe even more.

HEALTH

STAYING ALIVE

Sickness and disease were constant concerns in Tudor society and with good cause. One disease that struck England at various points between 1485 and 1551 was known as the 'sweating sickness' and could cause death in hours. People burnt strong-smelling herbs to ward away the smells that were thought to bring disease.

DRUG JAR

Bought from the apothecary to convey medicines, drug jars could be returned to the shop for a small sum, or kept



TIMELINE Tudor England's

Charting the age of Henry VIII and his wives, Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of



Did Anne Boleyn have a deformed hand?

TRUE OR FALSE?

THREE TUDOR MYTHS, BUSTED

Anne Boleyn had six fingers on one hand

The first written mention of Anne Boleyn's supposed extra digits is in the anti-Protestant chronicle *The Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism* in 1585. In it, the clearly biased Catholic priest Nicholas Sander writes that Anne "had a projecting tooth under the upper lip, and on her right hand six fingers". There is no evidence that this was the case. In fact, when Anne's skeleton was exhumed in 1876, her hands were described as being "delicate and well-shaped".

Henry VIII died of syphilis

Most historians now discount the theory that Henry had syphilis as there is no record of him being treated with mercury – the standard 'cure' at the time. Also, none of his wives or children were affected by the disease.

Elizabeth I was actually a man

According to a conspiracy theory from 1911, Elizabeth actually died from a fever at the age of ten. Her governess was so terrified of her father Henry VIII's reaction that she dressed a red-headed boy as the princess. For six decades...

AUGUST 1485

Henry Tudor defeats Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth and is crowned King Henry VII – taking the throne as the first monarch in the Tudor dynasty.

The following year he marries Elizabeth of York, eldest daughter of the late Edward IV. The marriage unites the houses of Lancaster and York, strengthens Henry's claim to the throne, and ends the Wars of the Roses.



OCTOBER 1492

Italian explorer Christopher Columbus discovers America while trying to find a new route to India, China, Japan and the Spice Islands – a voyage sponsored by the Spanish crown. Columbus and his men set foot on what is now the Bahamas in October.

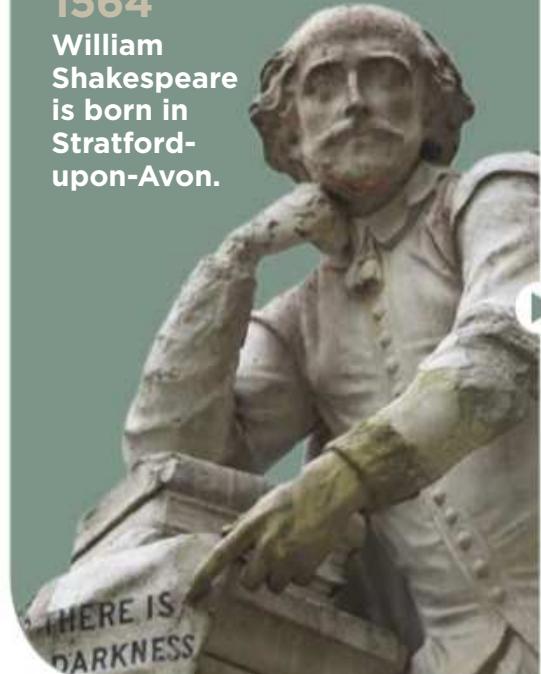
OCTOBER 1562

English mariners enter into the slave industry. It will be nearly 250 years before an act of parliament bans the trade.



APRIL 1564

William Shakespeare is born in Stratford-upon-Avon.



FEBRUARY 1555

The first executions for heresy take place. Around 300 Protestants are executed for their beliefs during Mary's three-year reign, earning her the gruesome nickname 'Bloody Mary'.

Among those executed for their beliefs is Hugh Latimer, former Bishop of Worcester, who is burned alive outside Balliol College in Oxford.

JULY 1553

Mary, daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, becomes the first woman to ascend to the throne. She is crowned Mary I in October.

A devout Catholic, Mary is determined to return England to Roman Catholicism.

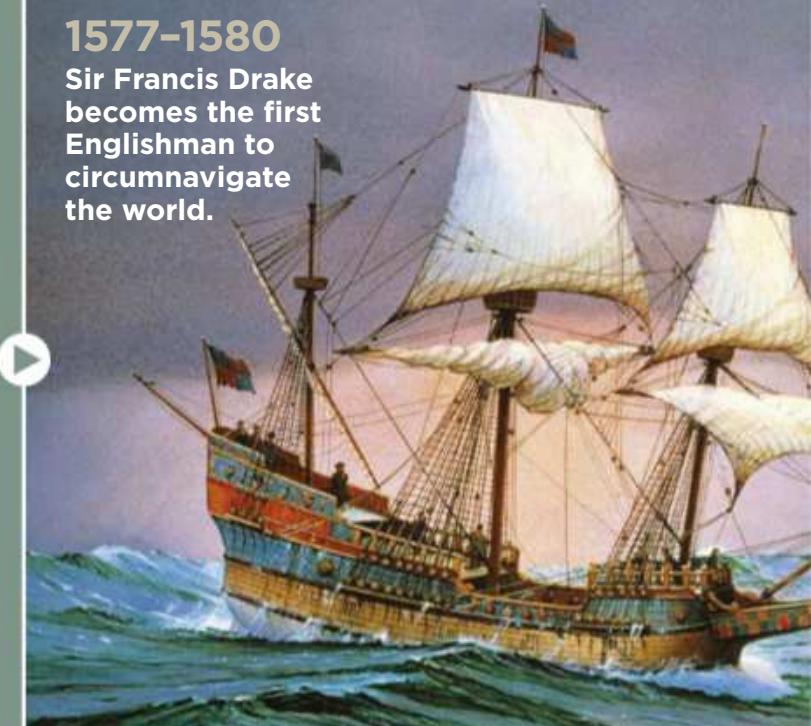


JULY 1568

Bottled beer is reputedly invented by the Dean of St Paul's. After losing his decanted beer while out fishing, the Dean finds the unopened bottle a few days later and finds its contents still perfectly drinkable.

1577-1580

Sir Francis Drake becomes the first Englishman to circumnavigate the world.



landmark events

Scots and William Shakespeare...

APRIL 1509
Henry VIII ascends to the throne following the death of his father. Two months later he marries the Spanish Princess Catherine of Aragon – the widow of his older brother, Arthur – after receiving dispensation from the Pope.

SEPTEMBER 1513
The forces of King James IV of Scotland are defeated by Catherine of Aragon's forces – as Henry was a war in France – at the Battle of Flodden. James IV suffers horrific injuries and dies on the field. The clash is the greatest ever Scottish invasion of England and also the biggest ever Anglo-Scottish battle.

DECEMBER 1515
Cardinal Thomas Wolsey is made Lord Chancellor of England, becoming the most powerful man in England after Henry VIII.

JUNE 1520
Henry VIII meets Francis I of France for the first time at the 'Field of the Cloth of Gold' near Calais. The meeting allowed both monarchs to display the grandeur and wealth of their respective courts.

JANUARY 1547
Henry VIII dies. He is succeeded by his nine-year-old son, Edward, who reigns until his death in 1553. Edward is succeeded by Lady Jane Grey who rules for just nine days.

NOVEMBER 1534
Henry VIII becomes supreme head of the Church of England, separating it from the Roman Catholic Church. Two years later Henry begins the confiscation of monastic property: 10,000 monks, friars and nuns are made homeless, their wealth seized by the crown.

JULY 1588
The English disperse the so-called 'invincible' Spanish Armada at the Battle of Gravelines. King Philip II of Spain's fleet is shattered, and limps home. Only half the original Armada survives, with Spanish losses numbering some 15,000.

JUNE 1613
The Globe Theatre in London burns to the ground during a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* where a cannon is used for a special effect – setting fire to the thatched roof. The theatre reopens in 1997, a few hundred yards from its original site.

HISTORY

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HISTORY
REVEALED *Bringing the past to life*

WARRIOR KING

This 19th-century engraving shows Richard III at Bosworth, hacking his way through the enemy ranks in a bid to reach his challenger, Henry Tudor

POWER DRESSING

According to a Spanish servant in Richard III's entourage, the **golden coronet** that Richard III wore over his helmet was worth **120,000 crowns**.



THE BATTLE OF BOSWORTH

On a Leicestershire field in August 1485, a single day of bloody combat brought about monumental change in England, as one dynasty fell and another was born...

On 7 August 1485, a tall, pale, 28-year-old man landed near Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire and dropped to his knees and kissed the ground. Henry Tudor had come to claim his crown. The force he'd brought with him was not a large one – perhaps 2,000 French and Scottish mercenaries plus a smattering of die-hard Lancastrians and former Yorkist supporters of Edward IV. South Wales was Tudor heartland, and the deaths of so many Welsh Yorkists at the Battle of Edgcote some 15 years earlier meant he met no opposition as he headed east. On the other hand, he struggled to recruit further support for his troops either. When he faced the army of King Richard III at Bosworth a fortnight later, he probably had no more than 5,000 men under his command.

Richard is said to have been delighted at the news that Henry Tudor had landed in his realm. For now he had the opportunity to get his hands on the annoying pretender. But, like Henry, Richard was to find it difficult to get men to join his army. His regime was not popular, especially in the South of England, where many knights and nobles were unhappy at the favour the new King was showing his supporters from the North. John Howard, whom Richard had made Duke of Norfolk, joined his ranks and the Earl of Northumberland also marched down from Alnwick to join him, but relatively few other major magnates had shown up. Even so, the force he led out of Leicester on 21 August was probably twice as large as that of Henry.

A third army was also present at Bosworth, and it was one that would play a crucial part in the eventual outcome of the battle. These were the troops of Sir Thomas and Sir William Stanley. Henry had been in contact with them before the battle and had almost certainly received promises of their support. The Stanleys had been alienated by Richard's support of the Harringtons, their local rivals, while Sir Thomas was Henry Tudor's step-father.

Richard was clearly wary of both these noblemen. He had even taken Sir Thomas's son George hostage, threatening that if the Stanleys did not support him on the battlefield, the young man would be killed. When the conflict began on 22 August, they remained on the sidelines but, even there,

6,000

The number of followers of the Stanley family, who waited to intervene at Bosworth

THE KING IN THE CAR PARK

After nearly 475 years, Richard III's long lost grave was finally found...

After his death at Bosworth, Richard III's body was taken to Greyfriars Friary in Leicester and buried in the church there. But when the friary was dissolved in 1538, its buildings were demolished and Richard's tomb was lost. Some even said that his bones were unceremoniously dumped in the River Soar. But many historians disagreed and, in 2012, an ambitious project was initiated, with the support of the Richard III Society, in a bid to find the long-lost remains of the controversial King. The ensuing archaeological excavation was led by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services. The team was highly sceptical about the chances of finding Richard, but they were still keen to find out more about the Friary itself.

In August of that year, archaeologists began digging where they thought the choir of the Friary Church would have been, a modern-day city council car park. And on the very first day of the dig they uncovered something that staggered them – the skeleton of a man with a curvature of the spine and severe battle injuries. Could this be Richard? The condition of the remains and their discovery where it was believed Richard had been buried certainly suggested so. Further proof came when an examination of the bones revealed they belonged to a male in his early 30s – Richard's age at the time of his death. All this alone would have made it extremely likely that the bones were those of the long-dead King, but even more compelling evidence was to follow. Analysis showed that DNA extracted from the bones matched that of two descendants of Richard's sister Anne. Richard Plantagenet had been found.



FOOD OF KINGS

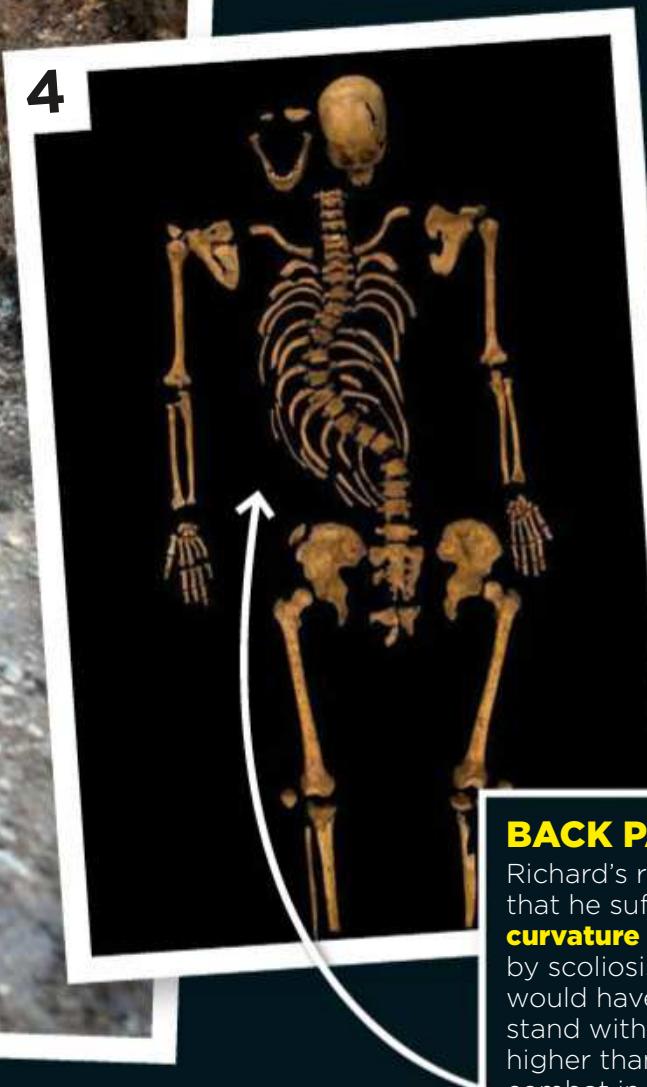
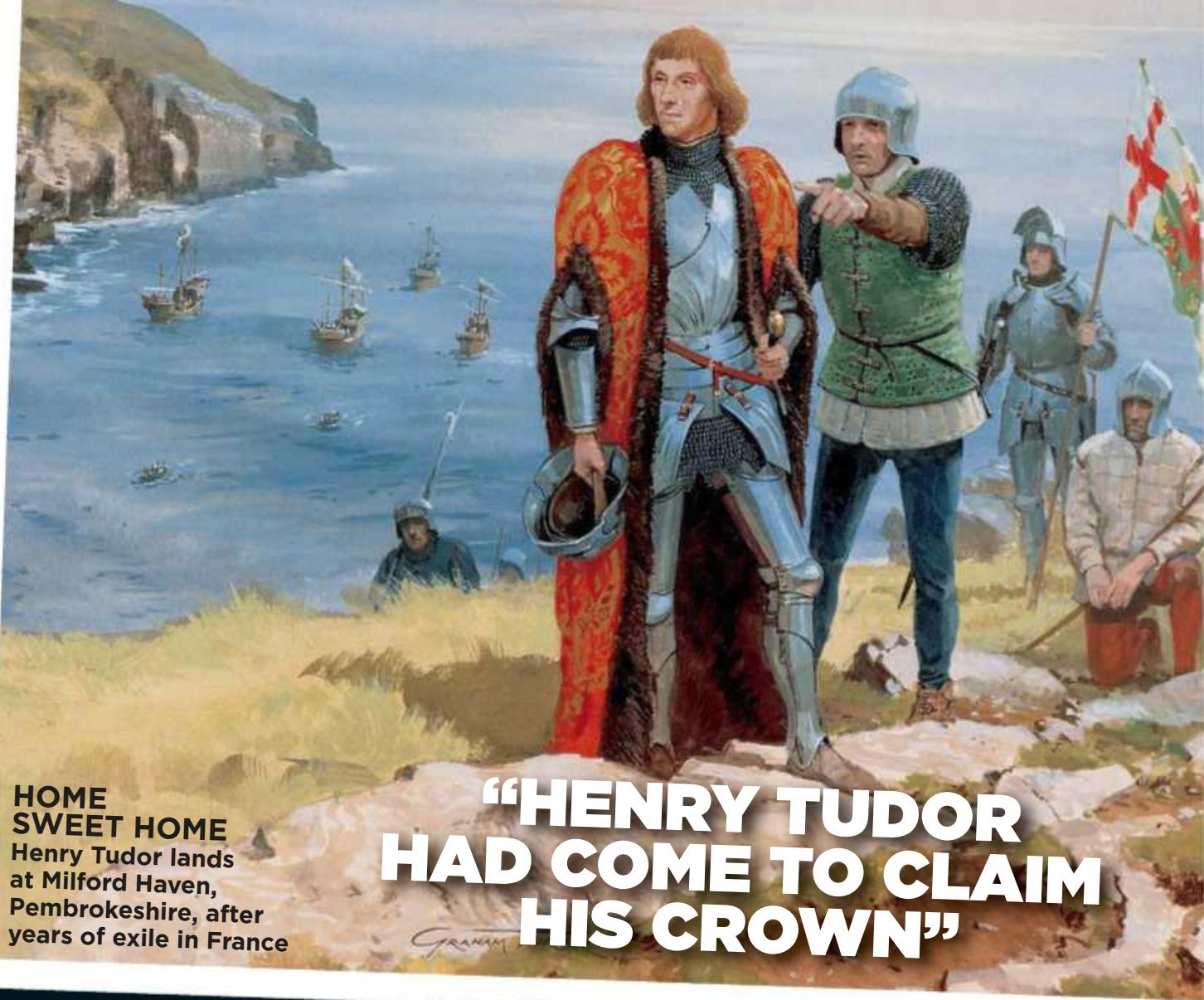
Isotope analysis of his bones and teeth revealed that, after becoming King, Richard's diet changed considerably. It appears that once he had the crown, he drank **more wine**, and ate more indulgent foods including **heron and swan**.



they were a constant threat and must have restricted Richard's room to manoeuvre.

ACTION STATIONS

No one is sure exactly how the two armies deployed at Bosworth. Richard's vanguard was commanded by the Duke of Norfolk, with his archers to the fore and possibly cavalry on each side. It seems likely that Richard also deployed his rearguard, under the Earl of Northumberland, to the left of the vanguard. Richard himself probably took up a position with a small reserve of mounted knights and men-at-arms behind the main battle line. Above him, his personal banner fluttered – it was embroidered with the cross of St George, white roses and his badge of a white boar. The flag was carried by Sir Percival Thirlwall, a knight from Northumberland. Richard's battle plan seems



▲ DISCOVERY

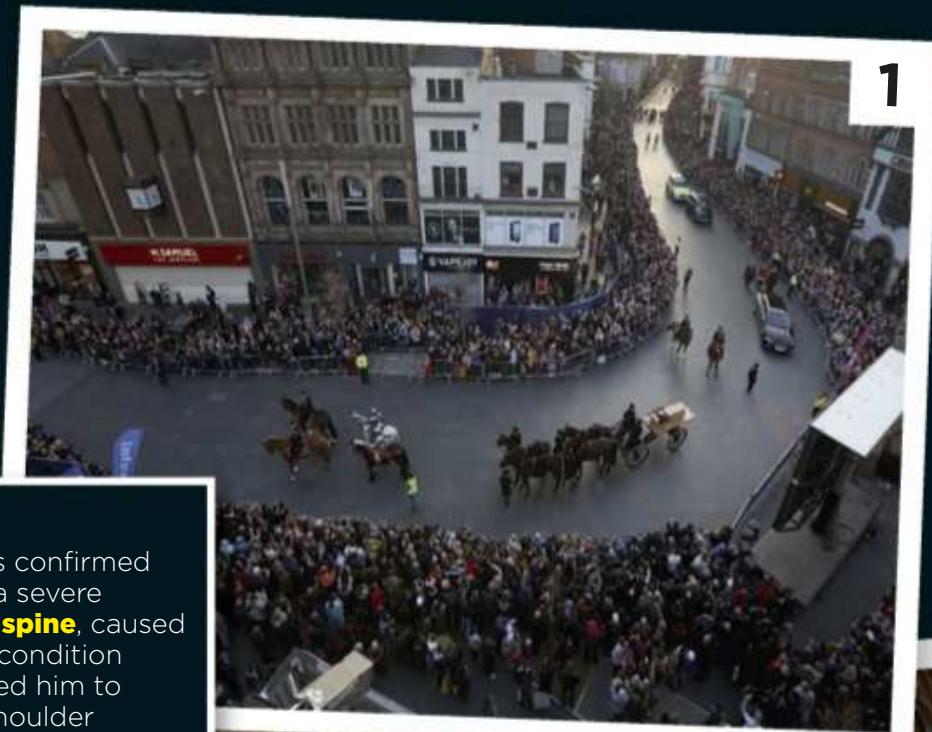
1. The council car park in Leicester, before the search for the Greyfriars Friary began
2. On the first day of the Greyfriars dig, archaeologists unearthed a skeleton
3. The battle-scarred remains in the ground, as they were discovered
4. After the skeleton was taken away for examination, it was two years before it was confirmed, to the point of 99.999%, to be Richard's remains

◀ RECONSTRUCTION

1. A 3D scan of the skull was made and sent to the University of Dundee, where experts began to recreate Richard's face
2. Layers of muscle, tissue and skin were added and the result was made into a plastic model, before the finishing touches were put in place
3. In February 2013, the King's face was revealed. Since then, further research has suggested he may have had blue eyes and lighter hair

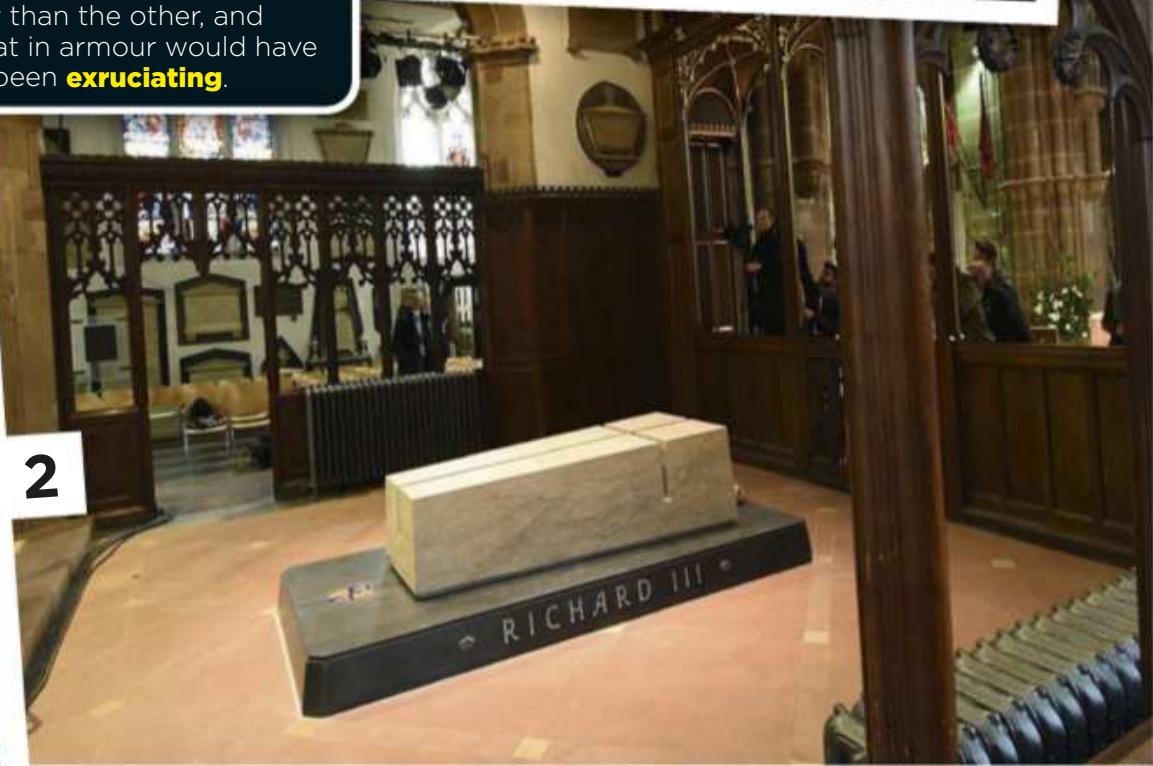
▼ REINTERMENT

1. In March 2015, ahead of his reburial, Richard's remains were taken on a procession past Bosworth and through several villages linked with the Battle, before making its way through Leicester
2. Richard III's coffin now lies in a vault beneath Leicester Cathedral, on top of which a limestone tomb has been placed



BACK PAIN

Richard's remains confirmed that he suffered a severe **curvature of the spine**, caused by scoliosis. The condition would have caused him to stand with one shoulder higher than the other, and combat in armour would have likely been **excruciating**.





WHERE THE KING FELL?

This **boar badge** may have told us where Richard III met his end. Silver-gilt, the badge was likely worn by a knight of Richard's retinue, who would probably have rode in his **last, ill-fated, charge**.

34

The number of lead roundshot found at Bosworth – more than found in the rest of the Wars combined

to have been to deploy in a wide line, to weaken the rebels with artillery fire as they advanced and then to outflank and surround them.

The Stanleys had refused, at this stage, to join Henry's main army – presumably because of Richard's key hostage. This meant Henry was forced to deploy most of his troops in the vanguard, under the command of the Earl of Oxford, in a wide array to try and match Richard's frontage. Meanwhile, the Stanleys looked on, probably from the south.

As Henry's army advanced, the royal artillery opened fire. Many of the lead and stone balls they fired were little more than a few centimetres in diameter but, when fired into a group of tightly-packed men, they could be deadly. To avoid the threat they posed, and to make the most of the terrain in front of him, the Earl of Oxford decided to mount a flanking attack on the right wing of Richard's army,



where Norfolk commanded the vanguard. He turned his troops north-west, putting the sun at their backs and using marshland to protect their right flank. Oxford clearly hoped that if he could concentrate his effort on one part of Richard's army and drive it back, it might cause the rest of his army to flee. It was a clever move

and it worked brilliantly. Strung out in a long line as they were, it was difficult for Richard's army to adjust its position. The left flank under Northumberland was in a particularly difficult position. For those men, freedom of movement was constrained by the marshland in front of them and they also had to keep an eye on Stanley's forces, who were lurking nearby.

BITTER CONTEST

As Oxford's vanguard passed the marsh, they wheeled to the right and the fight with Norfolk's troops began. Archers on both sides poured thousands of deadly arrows into the ranks of their enemies. As the two forces drew closer, the archers fell back and the fighting turned into close-quarter combat. Men began stabbing with swords and spears and hacking with polearms.

Oxford and Norfolk were old rivals, notably for power in East Anglia. On this day, it was to be Oxford that would come out on top. Some 15 years earlier at the Battle of Barnet, Oxford's troops had defeated the Yorkists in front of them, only to lose discipline and chase them off the battlefield. When they returned, the battle had been lost. Oxford wasn't going to make the same mistake again. Keeping tight control of his men, he formed them into a wedge – a classic attacking formation designed to punch a hole in the enemy ranks. The plan worked and, with Northumberland's men unable – or unwilling – to support them, Richard's vanguard was driven back and the Duke of Norfolk was slain.

It was probably at this point that Richard saw an opportunity to end Henry's challenge once

SITE OF THE BATTLE

Finding the exact location of this nation-changing battle was a 21st century mission...

ALAMY XI, CORBIS XI, GETTY XI

For many years the exact location of this battle was lost to history. The visitor centre was sited on Ambion Hill, where the battle was thought to have been fought. However, after this was challenged by a number

of independent historians, in 2004 the Battlefields Trust began a major survey to find evidence that would pinpoint the exact location of the clash.

A wide variety of techniques were used, including place-name and soil analyses, a careful study of source materials and an extensive metal-detecting survey. This established that the marsh, which so many of the sources mentioned, had actually been some 2 miles south west of the traditional site.

By 2010, metal detectorists had uncovered a large scatter of medieval cannon balls in the area, together with a number of other battle-related artefacts including a tiny silver-gilt boar, the personal badge of Richard III.



REMAINS OF WAR
FAR LEFT: A silver-gilt boar badge and part of the hilt from a sword found at Bosworth LEFT: A fanciful depiction of Richard III's heroic death

and for all. The Tudor leader could be seen: he had become separated from the main part of his army and was now protected by just a small body of troops. If Richard could charge across the battlefield and kill him, the rebellion would be over.

Followed by his most trusted knights and men-at-arms, Richard thundered across the battlefield, towards the pretender. Details of what happened next are sketchy – some accounts say that Henry was protected by the long pikes of his French mercenaries, but Richard certainly got close enough to his enemy to kill William Brandon, Henry's standard bearer.

Sir John Cheney was the next to face Richard's furious onslaught. Cheney was a noted warrior and a giant of a man (when his tomb in Salisbury Cathedral and his remains were examined it was estimated he stood 6'8" tall, an extraordinary height for that age) but even so he was no match for Richard who sent him tumbling from his horse to crash, stunned, to the ground.

But Richard and his men could get no further and it was probably now, as they traded blows with Henry's retinue, that the ominous cries of "A Stanley, a Stanley" were heard. Sir William Stanley's force had finally intervened – on the side of Henry Tudor. Richard and his men were pushed back into the nearby marshland, where no horse could pass. Forced to dismount, they fought to the last on foot. Thirwall had his legs sliced from under him and fell to the ground, still clutching Richard's banner. Richard himself fought on until he was hacked to the ground in a welter of blows. The last Plantagenet King of England was dead and a new, Tudor, dynasty was now begun.

THE SPOILS

News of Richard's death would have spread quickly across the battlefield, and those of Richard's men still fighting would have made their escape if they could, or laid down their arms and asked for quarter if they couldn't. The victors would soon have busied themselves, stripping bodies of armour and weapons and searching for valuables. Sir William Stanley is said to have taken a set of tapestries from

THE BIRTH OF THE TUDOR DYNASTY

Henry Tudor had managed to get his hands on the crown, but could he keep it?

Although Henry had won the throne at Bosworth, it was by no means certain that he would be able to maintain it. Enough disgruntled Ricardians remained, particularly in the North, to make rebellion a distinct possibility. Henry strengthened his support by marrying Elizabeth of York – the daughter of Edward IV – and placed the 15-year-old Earl of Warwick, Edward's nephew, in 'protective custody' in the Tower of London.

He craftily dated his reign from the day before Bosworth, thus ensuring that anyone fighting for Richard at Bosworth was technically guilty of treason. As it happened, the only significant execution after Bosworth was that of Sir William Catesby, one of Richard's close associates. Henry preferred to ensure the loyalty of potential opponents by taking bonds from them – sums of money deposited as a guarantee of future good behaviour.

In 1486, Henry was faced by two attempted rebellions – one in the Midlands and one in the North – but neither attracted much support and both were quickly suppressed.

In 1487, however, he faced a more serious threat. A Ricardian force landed in Lancashire, representing a man claiming to be the Earl of Warwick and who had been crowned Edward VI in Dublin that May. The 'Earl' was, in fact, an imposter who was later named as Lambert Simnel. The rebellion was funded by Richard III's sister Margaret of Burgundy, and led by the Earl of Lincoln (who had been Richard's heir) and Richard's old friend Francis Lord Lovell. Like Henry's army two years earlier, the core of the force was made up of foreign troops – mercenaries from Switzerland and Germany and 4,000 Irish – and, like Henry's force, it failed to attract much English support. Even so the rebels had clearly been in correspondence with some of the English nobility, and it was with some relief that Henry saw his vanguard defeat the rebels on 16 June at Stoke near Newark.

Stoke was the final battle of the Wars. Although he had to deal with other rebellions and face another pretender in Perkin Warbeck later in his reign, he never had to take the field against a rival again.



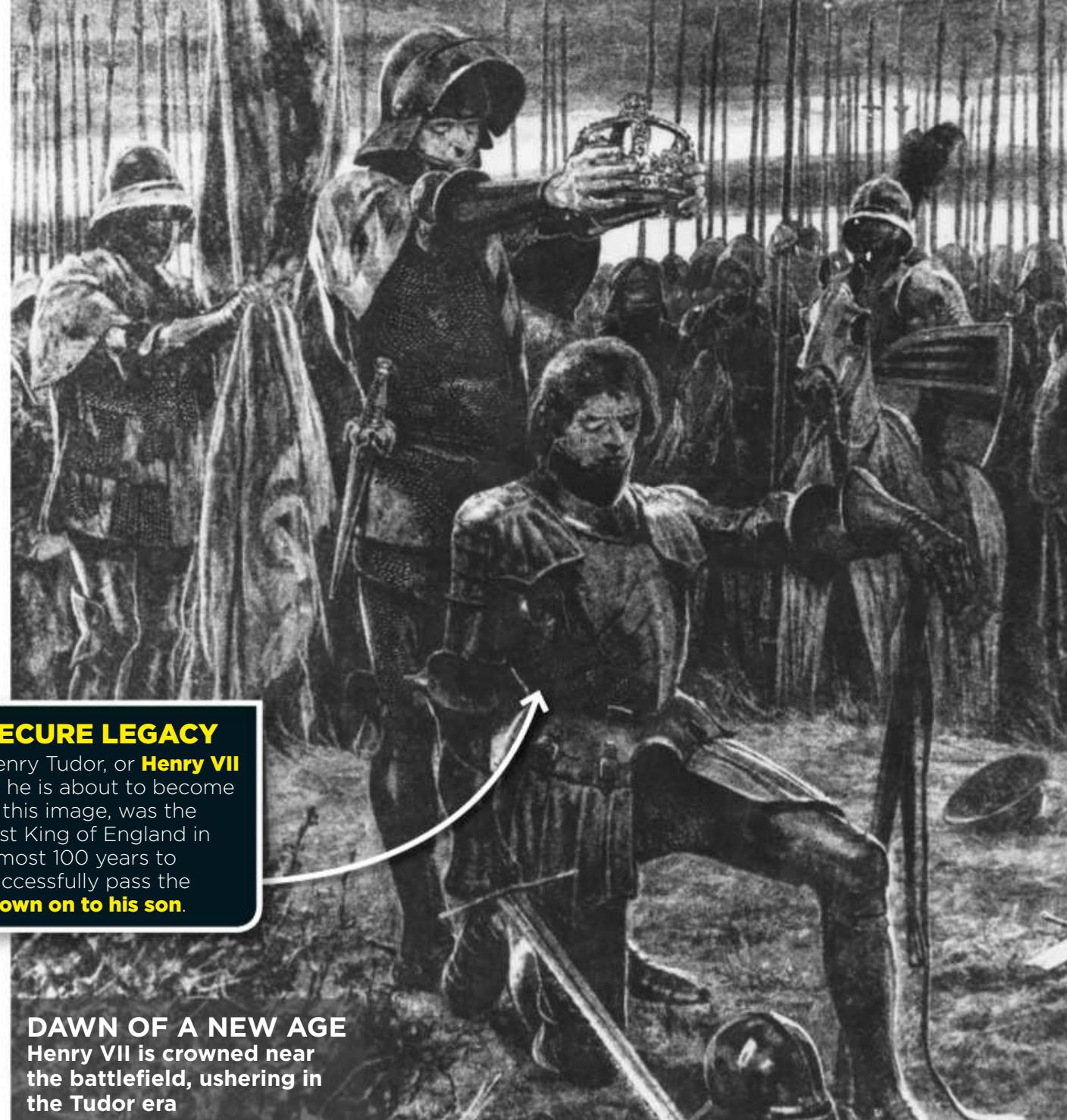
WEDDED BLISS

The Tudor PR machine fired up to promote Henry VII's marriage to Elizabeth of York, which united the two houses of Lancaster and York



ALAMY XI, GETTY XI, KOBAL XI

FLORAL TRIBUTE
White roses adorn a statue
of Richard III outside
Leicester Cathedral in 2015

**SECURE LEGACY**

Henry Tudor, or **Henry VII** as he is about to become in this image, was the first King of England in almost 100 years to successfully pass the **crown on to his son**.

DAWN OF A NEW AGE

Henry VII is crowned near the battlefield, ushering in the Tudor era

“A SWORD WAS THRUST THROUGH HIS HEAD AND A SWIPE CLEAVED HIS SKULL”

Richard's baggage train. Not everything of value was found. A beautiful silver-gilt boar badge, presumably worn by one of Richard's retinue, fell into the marsh during the battle and there it lay, undiscovered, for over five centuries until it was uncovered by someone on the search for the battle site. One item that certainly was found, was the coronet Richard wore over his helmet during his last charge. Legend has it that the knight Sir Reginald Bray found it in a thorn bush, and brought it to a nearby hill where Henry had set up his standard. One of the Stanleys placed it on the new King's head. That mound is still known as Crown Hill today.

THE FALLEN KING

Surrounded by his enemies, Richard had gone down fighting – even Tudor historians, who would have been keen to besmirch the former ruler, admitted that. The recent discovery of his remains has enabled us to piece together the brutal final moments of his life. Richard suffered a number of wounds (including at least one after death, when someone thrust a knife into his buttocks) but the fatal blows seem to

have been a sword thrust through the back of the head and a vicious swipe that cleaved off the back of his skull. This supports a near-contemporary account, which suggests he was hacked down from behind with a halberd – an axe-like weapon on a pole.

After the battle, Richard's naked body was slung over a horse and taken to Leicester. A Tudor chronicler later described how he was left without “so much as a clout to cover his privy members” and taken “trussed... like a hogge or a calfe, his head an armes hanging on one side of the horse, and his legs on the other side, and all besprinkled with mire and blood.” The body was displayed for three days to prove that he really was dead, before being buried in a hurriedly dug grave in a Fransiscan priory. Later, Henry VII paid for a tomb to cover the grave but, when the friary was dissolved and demolished in Henry VIII's reign, the site was lost. The resting place of one of England's most controversial monarchs would remain a mystery until 2012, when his body, along with countless answers about his death, were found beneath a Leicester car park.



The number of known injuries Richard III suffered before falling at Bosworth

**EXPERT VIEW****Simon Marsh**

Research Co-ordinator,
Battlefields Trust

“BOSWORTH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ENGLISH BATTLE”

Why are the Wars still relevant?

Aside from the drama, which makes *Game of Thrones* look tame, the Wars are an object lesson in the consequences of what we would call a failed state. They also represent a pivotal period in English history – dynastic change heralding the Tudor age and the introduction of firepower into our armies to name but two.

Which Wars character do you find particularly interesting?

For sheer determination, persistence and longevity it has to be Henry Tudor's mother, Margaret Beaufort. She must have been formidable to have so single-mindedly pursued her son's weak claim to the throne from the midst of Yorkist England. But Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick is also fascinating. The lust for power shown by his switch from die-hard Yorkist to committed Lancastrian makes you want to know more about the man.

Why are the battlefields worth saving?

They add to our understanding of what happened there. The records reveal only so much. But battlefields also contain the archaeology – arrowheads, bullets and cannonballs – which, if recovered and analysed, can increase our knowledge. At Bosworth, such work rediscovered the battlefield and almost certainly the area where Richard III was killed.

Why was finding the real location of the Battle of Bosworth so important?

Alongside Hastings and Naseby, Bosworth is probably the most important English battle. Rediscovery of the site has helped us understand why events turned out the way they did. The collection of cannonballs found there, which undoubtedly provides new insight into late-medieval warfare, is unique in Europe, and strengthens the arguments about why Bosworth and similar sites should be preserved.

NOT YOUR AVERAGE KING

Henry VIII, the larger-than-life monarch who had six wives, broke with Rome and established the Church of England



HENRY VIII

The six wives behind the troubled TUDOR KING

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Arguably England's most famous monarch, the larger-than-life Tudor King is known for his over-indulgence, his lifelong obsession with siring a son and his six wives – two of whom he sent to their deaths. But Henry – the second son who was never meant to be King – was far more than the obese, womanising monarch of film and fiction. He was the father of the English Reformation – the man who severed England from the Roman Catholic Church and permanently changed the nature, and role, of parliament.

Henry began his rule as a great Renaissance King. He presided over a court that embraced the new

ideas, art, architecture, learning and music of the era. But, as age, injury and ill-health took their toll, he became a suspicious, cruel and tyrannical leader.

Whether he is remembered as the golden Prince of his youth, or the harsh despot of his later years, there's no doubt that Henry's reign was one of immense change – both constructive and cataclysmic. His 37-year rule laid the foundations for one of Britain's longest-lasting dynasties and, despite his desire for a male heir, he will be remembered as the father of the nation's most enigmatic Queen: Elizabeth I.



NOW READ ON...

NEED TO KNOW

- 1 Becoming King p32
- 2 On the Throne p34
- 3 Power and Politics p36
- 4 All the King's Men p38
- 5 Henry's Downfall p39

TIMELINE

The highs and lows of Henry's life p40

BECOMING KING

Henry's charmed life ended abruptly when he became heir to the throne

Born the second son of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York on 28 June 1491, Henry Tudor was never destined for the throne. With his older brother, Arthur, already in line for the throne, it is probable that young Henry was destined for a career in the church. Little detail is known of Henry's childhood, but he would have received an education fit for a prince with theology, languages, philosophy, music, arithmetic and literature all featuring. His schooling was administered by some of the leading tutors of the day, including Poet Laureate John Skelton, and Thomas More, who would later become Henry's key counsellor. The Renaissance scholar Erasmus described Henry as possessing "a lively mentality which reached for the stars, and he was able beyond measure to bring to perfection whichever task he undertook."

Naturally athletic, Henry received tuition in riding, dancing, jousting, tennis, archery and hunting, and had a passion for astronomy. His eye for detail and encyclopedic memory were recorded by many of his acquaintance. In

appearance, he is said to have resembled his grandfather, Edward IV – broad-shouldered but slim – with auburn hair and fair skin.

LOST TO HISTORY

The original mural – painted on a wall in Whitehall Palace – was **destroyed in a fire** in 1698.

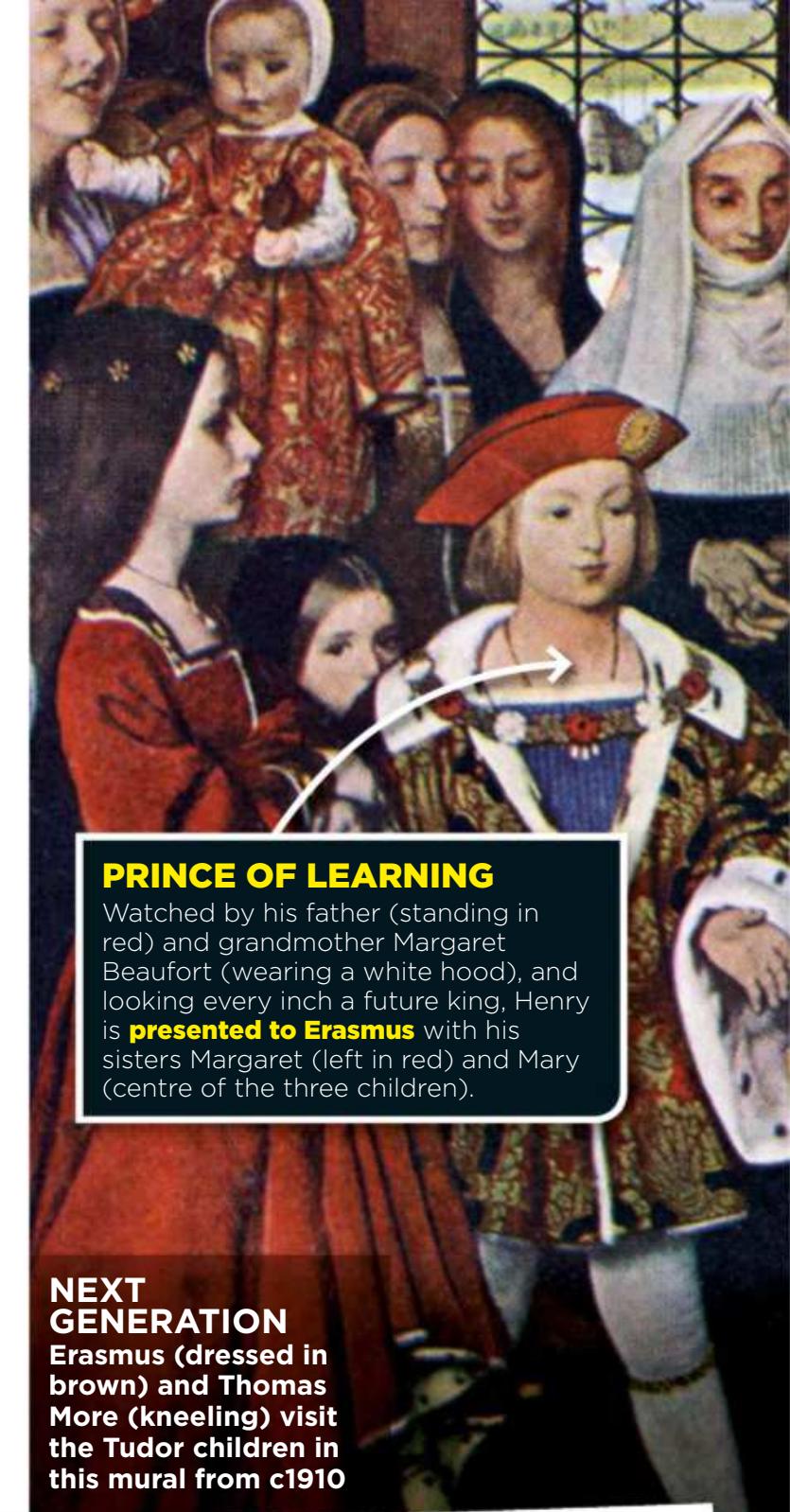
2
The age at which Henry was appointed Constable of Dover Castle and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports

Unusually for the time, Henry was raised with sisters, Margaret and Mary, in a predominately female household, and his mother and his paternal grandmother, Margaret Beaufort, exerted considerable influence over his daily life. Henry is said to have adored his mother, with some historians claiming that the similarity in their handwriting indicates that it was Elizabeth herself who taught him to read and write. Contact with his father and older brother is likely to have been limited.

Margaret Beaufort, who had given birth to Henry's father at the age of 13, was devoted to her grandson. It is probably she who supervised her grandchildren's education. Indeed, it was Margaret and not Elizabeth who was charged with the domestic arrangements of Henry VII's household and enforcing the rules of the royal nurseries. Renowned for her piety and learning, it is most likely Margaret who instilled Henry with his strict religious beliefs.

Until the age of ten, Henry would have lived something of a carefree life as a royal prince, enjoying many freedoms denied his older brother, who was being groomed for kingship by their father, Henry VII. Arthur's sudden death in 1502, however, would change the course of Henry's life, and that of the Tudor dynasty.

DYNASTIC BEGINNINGS
Henry's birth was the product of the 1486 union of Elizabeth of York and the new Henry VII



PRINCE OF LEARNING

Watched by his father (standing in red) and grandmother Margaret Beaufort (wearing a white hood), and looking every inch a future king, Henry is **presented to Erasmus** with his sisters Margaret (left in red) and Mary (centre of the three children).

NEXT GENERATION

Erasmus (dressed in brown) and Thomas More (kneeling) visit the Tudor children in this mural from c1910



unable to leave the palace without chaperones and only by way of a private door into the park.

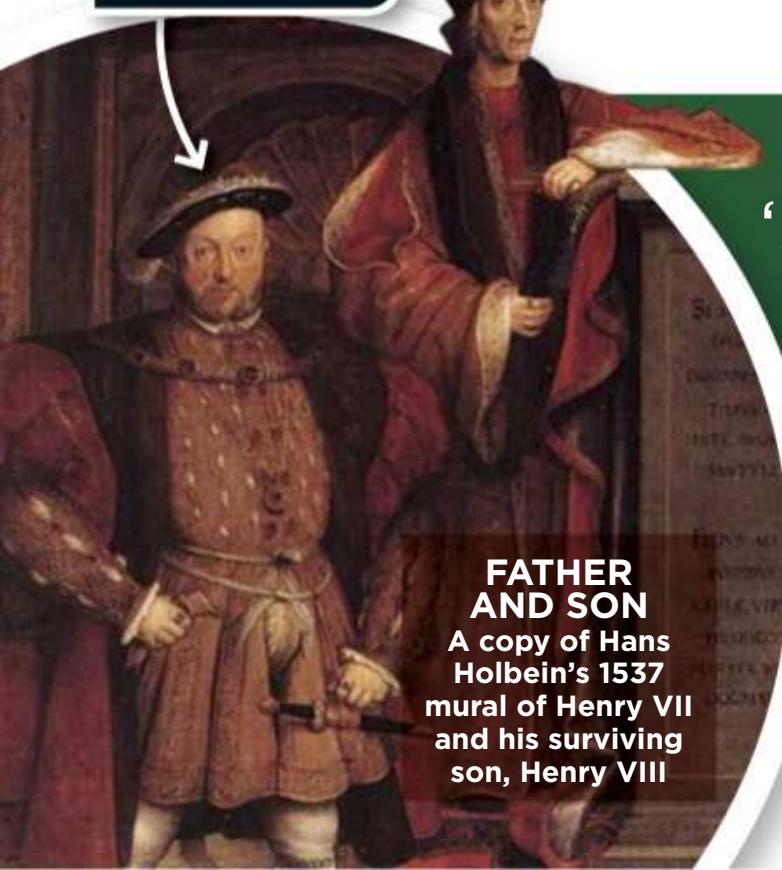
Henry, whose beloved mother had died in February 1503, was now under the sole influence of his father, who took care to keep him out of the public eye. Having lost two other sons, Henry VII may have been overly concerned for the safety of his one remaining heir. But other theories suggest the King was suspicious of his young, talented son. Spanish secretary Miguel Perez Almazan stated the King was "beset by the fear that his son might in his lifetime obtain too much power".

END OF AN ERA 'SPARE' TO HEIR

On 2 April 1502, Henry's carefree existence came to an abrupt end, with the death of his 15-year-old brother. Any plans for Henry to enter the Church were discarded and the ten-year-old boy was proclaimed Prince of Wales in February 1503.

But, unlike Arthur, Henry did not receive the same training in kingship. Instead, he found himself under strict supervision, spending much of his time in a room that adjoined the King's bedchamber

FATHER AND SON
A copy of Hans Holbein's 1537 mural of Henry VII and his surviving son, Henry VIII





ROYAL DEMANDS

Erasmus of Rotterdam, one of the most famous scholars of his day, visited the royal children in 1499. According to legend, eight-year-old Henry demanded the Dutch humanist **write a poem** for him during the meeting – which he did.

“A KING IS SOMETHING SPECIAL IN THE WORLD OF MEN; ALMOST A GOD. BUT NONETHELESS HE IS A MAN”

Erasmus writing to Henry VIII, 1517



RIGHT TO RULE

Henry VII and his family (deceased and living) are shown with St George who is defeating the dragon, c1505-9

FAMILY TRAITS

LIKE FATHER LIKE SON?

When the future Henry VII seized the crown from Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, he became the first monarch of the new Tudor dynasty. But his hold on the throne was far from secure and, despite his marriage to Elizabeth of York (a move designed to unite the houses of York and Lancaster) plots and conspiracies plagued his reign.

Keen to promote peace within a country that had seen years of uncertainty and warfare, Henry VII devoted himself to rebuilding the royal finances, avoiding war, promoting trade and enforcing taxes. He spent much of his time personally overseeing matters of government. Traditionally, he has been portrayed as shrewd, calculating and suspicious. Henry VIII, in comparison, acceded the throne with no opposition, inheriting a wealthy and relatively peaceful kingdom.

Contemporary sources reveal that Henry VIII was not close to his father, particularly after the deaths of Arthur and Elizabeth. His cousin Reginald Pole claimed the King had “no affection or fancy unto him”. Whether or not this is true, the two Henrys approached the throne with differing attitudes. Where Henry VII kept a thrifty court, Henry VIII came to the crown larger than life, full of youthful energy, and with a desire to spend and be admired. In an attempt to assert his own authority, Henry VIII quickly reversed many of his father’s policies and even executed some of the dead King’s most trusted servants.

But Henry VII did instil some lessons in his son, namely the importance of having a male heir, and a need for suspicion at court, a trait seen openly in Henry VIII later in life.

CHILDHOOD COMPANIONS FOREVER FRIENDS

As a small child, Henry shared a nursery with his siblings, but when Arthur was taken away to learn the ways of sovereignty, Henry was left with his sisters and close friends. Particular among these were Charles Brandon and William Compton. Brandon was the son of Henry VII’s standard-bearer at the Battle of Bosworth, and eventually married Henry’s younger sister, Mary – to Henry’s displeasure.

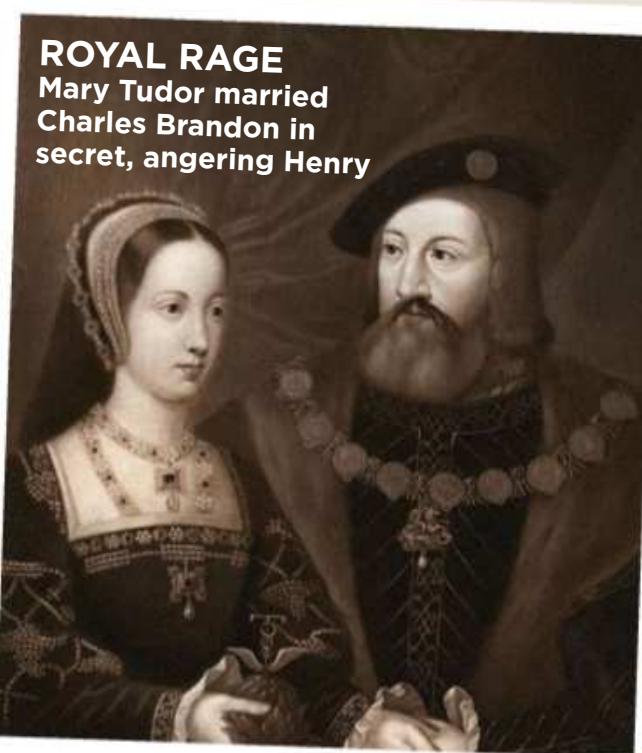
Compton, nine years older than Henry, shared the Prince’s love of sport and the two became close friends. He eventually took the post of Groom of the Stool, waiting on the King while he used the latrine – a role of great influence.

With monarchs deemed to have been chosen by God, physical punishment of royal children was out of the question, so a ‘whipping boy’ would have received Henry’s punishment instead. The two would have grown up together – seeing his friend receive beatings on his

behalf was meant to deter Henry from future misdemeanours. We don’t know the name of Henry’s whipping boy, but we know that, as a child, he had a Fool named John Goose, charged with keeping him entertained.

ROYAL RAGE

Mary Tudor married Charles Brandon in secret, angering Henry



ON THE THRONE

From playing sport to studying great thinkers, Henry was keen to show the world he was a true Renaissance ruler

From the beginning of his reign, Henry was viewed as the ultimate Renaissance ruler: educated, handsome, fearless, artistic, virtuous. He was Europe's 'golden king' who ascended the throne as the Renaissance swept across Europe with new ideas on education, religion and the arts.

Determined to banish the impression of a thrifty English court instigated by his father, Henry VIII surrounded himself with the country's brightest lights – handsome young men like himself

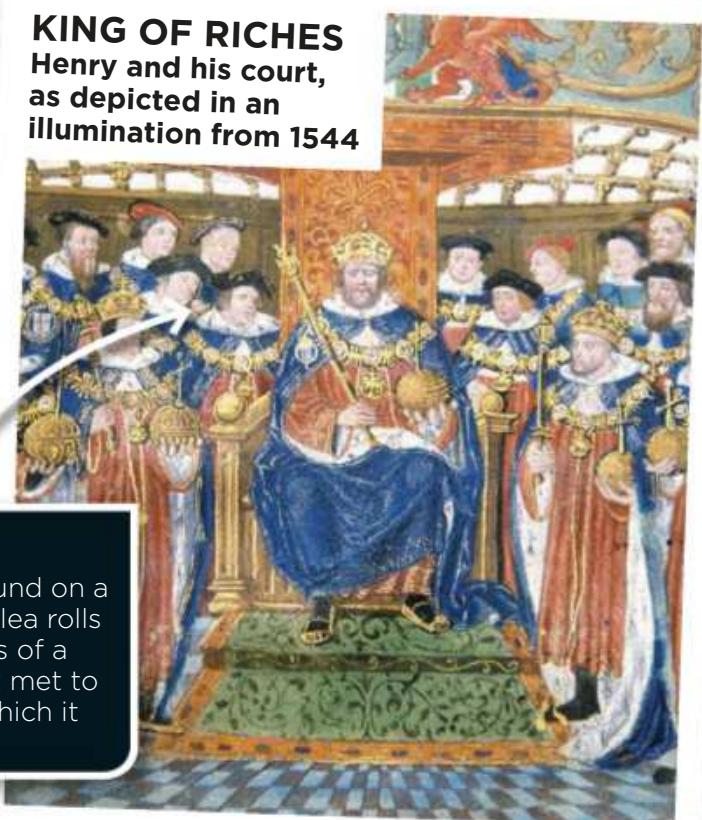
who jested, hunted, danced, spoke several languages (Henry himself spoke Spanish, French and Latin) and played music. Court festivities were grand, lavish, and carried out on a huge scale, while contemporary sources rave about the qualities of the Tudor King. Venetian Ambassador Giustinian, writing in 1515, describes Henry as "most excellent in his personal endowments, but... likewise so gifted and adorned with mental accomplishments

of every soil that we believe him to have few equals in the world".

17,810

The number of items listed on the Inventory of Henry VIII of England, compiled in 1547 after his death

KING OF RICHES
Henry and his court, as depicted in an illumination from 1544



ROLL WITH IT

This image can be found on a **plea roll** from 1544. Plea rolls recorded the business of a specific court when it met to hear various cases, which it did four times a year.

PLAYING TO A CROWD RENAISSANCE MAN

"A most invincible King, whose acquirements and qualities are so many and excellent that I consider him to excel all who ever wore a crown". So wrote papal nuncio Francesco Chieregato after witnessing Henry entertain a visiting embassy from France in 1517. At the event, Henry is said to have played every musical instrument available

to him, no doubt impressing his audience and reasserting their belief in him as the epitome of a Renaissance ruler.

Henry's musical talents are well recorded – he owned and played a number of musical instruments and was a highly respected musician and composer. *The Henry VIII Songbook*, compiled in c1518, features some 20 songs and 13 instrumental pieces ascribed to 'The Kynge H viij'.

Henry was a keen patron of the arts and spent huge sums of money on new palaces, paintings, tapestries and other decorative objects over the course of his

reign. One tapestry from 1537, which hung in the Great Hall of Hampton Court Palace, took three years to make and cost £2,000 – more than £600,000 in today's money.

Henry's desire to shine, combined with his love of luxury, also extended to his clothing and appearance. Keen to show off how many clothes he owned, Henry rarely wore clothes more than once for important occasions, and often gave garments away to members of his court.

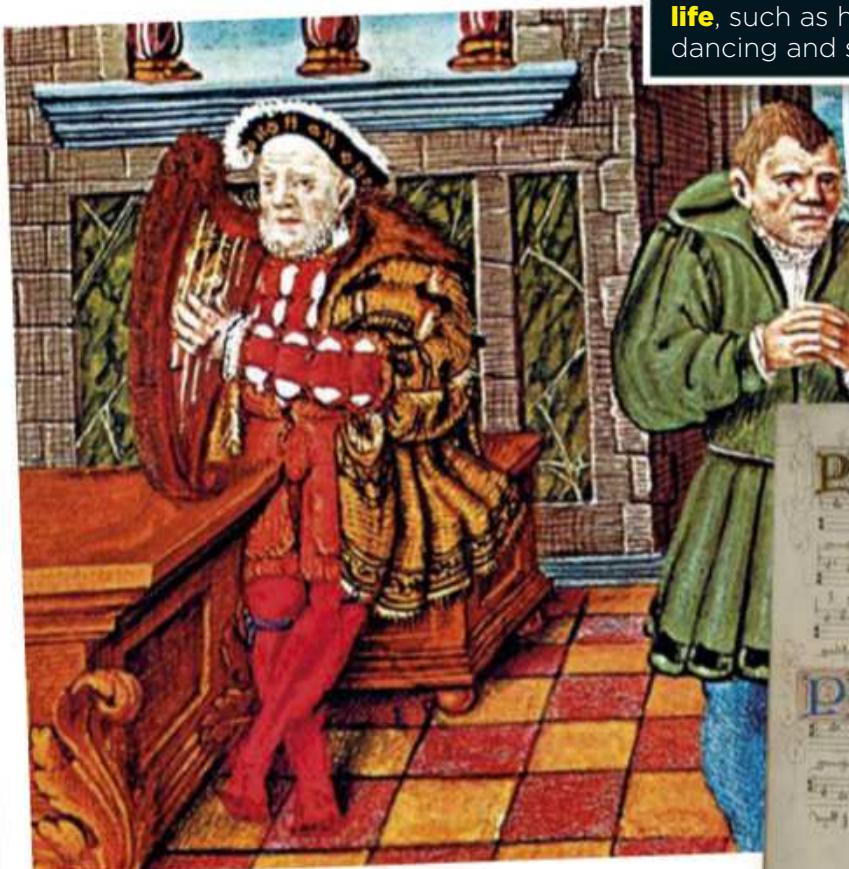
The materials used to create his clothes were imported from all over the world: Henry insisted on being the first to see any new textiles and jewels being imported into the country. In a typical year, the King would spend at least £3,000 on clothing, often considerably more, and in 1519, he was described by Venetian Ambassador Giustinian as being "the best dressed sovereign in the world."

Henry loved to accessorise his clothes with expensive jewellery – yet another way of displaying his wealth and power to those around him. At his death in 1547, he owned no less than 3,690 precious gemstones.

MUSIC TO THE EARS

FAR LEFT: Henry plays the harp with his fool, Will Somer, in an image from the King's prayer book

LEFT: *The Henry VIII Songbook* is now in the British Library



MIGHTY LEADER

The Tudor King's public image was one of strength and control

PROUD AS A PEACOCK

Henry adored precious gems and was rarely seen without them in public. Here, his jewelled collar emphasises his wide, padded shoulders and the gem-studded sleeves of his embroidered tunic.

NO CROWN NEEDED

Deliberately painted without his crown and other trappings of monarchy, Henry relies on his immense physical presence to convey his majesty, vigour and masculine magnificence.

ON SHOW

Codpieces reached their peak during the reign of Henry VIII. The King's masculinity and virility is meant to be emphasised by the size of his codpiece – designed to draw the viewer's eye.

SHAPELY CALVES

Henry is said to have been very proud of his legs, perhaps with good reason. In 1515, a contemporary described the King as being "above the usual height, with an extremely fine calf to his leg".

MACHO MAN

This full-length portrait of Henry VIII, by an unknown 16th-century artist, hangs in Liverpool's Walker Art Gallery

ALL POWERFUL

Henry's stance – legs straight and parted – was associated in art with triumphant heroes such as St George after overcoming the dragon.

PHYSICAL PROWESS

THE PEAK OF PRINCELY PERFORMANCE

Henry's athletic nature continued into adulthood and he excelled in a number of sports. At the age of 23 he stood at an impressive 6' 2" with a 42-inch chest, and he was said to have been an outstanding jousting, as well as a fine wrestler and tennis player.

Despite the dangers involved, Henry often took part in jousts, riding under the chivalric title of Sir Loyal Heart. One such event took place in 1511, to celebrate the birth of the King's son, Prince Henry. It included a movable forest topped by a castle made of golden paper. Sadly the longed-for baby boy only lived 52 days.

The King's love of hunting is also well recorded. Contemporary sources state that Henry would often tire eight or ten horses before he himself was done with the chase.

A keen archer, Henry was said to have been able to hit a target at 220 yards, and, perhaps surprisingly, he also played football. The inventory of possessions drawn up on Henry's death in 1547 listed a pair of football boots, ordered from the Great Wardrobe in 1526, in order for the King to participate in a Shrove Tuesday match. The hand-stitched leather boots cost four shillings and were requested alongside two pairs of shoes for fencing.

JOY OF THE JOUST

Henry VIII depicted on his way to a jousting tournament, dressed in full armour, 1511

POLITICS AND POWER

In England and abroad, Henry's desire to shine was marked by all

During June 1520, Henry and his court travelled to France in the hope of forging an alliance with its King, Francis I. The two men had long been rivals, both personally and politically. Francis, three years younger than Henry, was also revered as a great Renaissance ruler and the meeting was a chance for both to display the wealth and grandeur of their respective courts, as well as their personal talents.

On 8 June, Henry arrived at the designated meeting point – a valley near Calais known as the Golden Dale – accompanied by 500 horsemen and some 3,000 foot soldiers, and with no expense spared in terms of wealth displayed. When the two Kings met for the first time, "they embraced each other in great friendship and then, dismounting, embraced each other again, taking off their hats..."

The event was more about vast displays of wealth than political talks, although these did take place. Pavilions of cloth gold (using real filaments of gold sewn with silk to make the fabric) and a huge temporary palace set on brickwork foundations was set up for the occasion. Men from Flanders and

6,000

The number of men needed to build the temporary palace

England were sent ahead to erect the structure, which comprised a timber framework with canvas walls and roof painted to make it look like a solid structure.

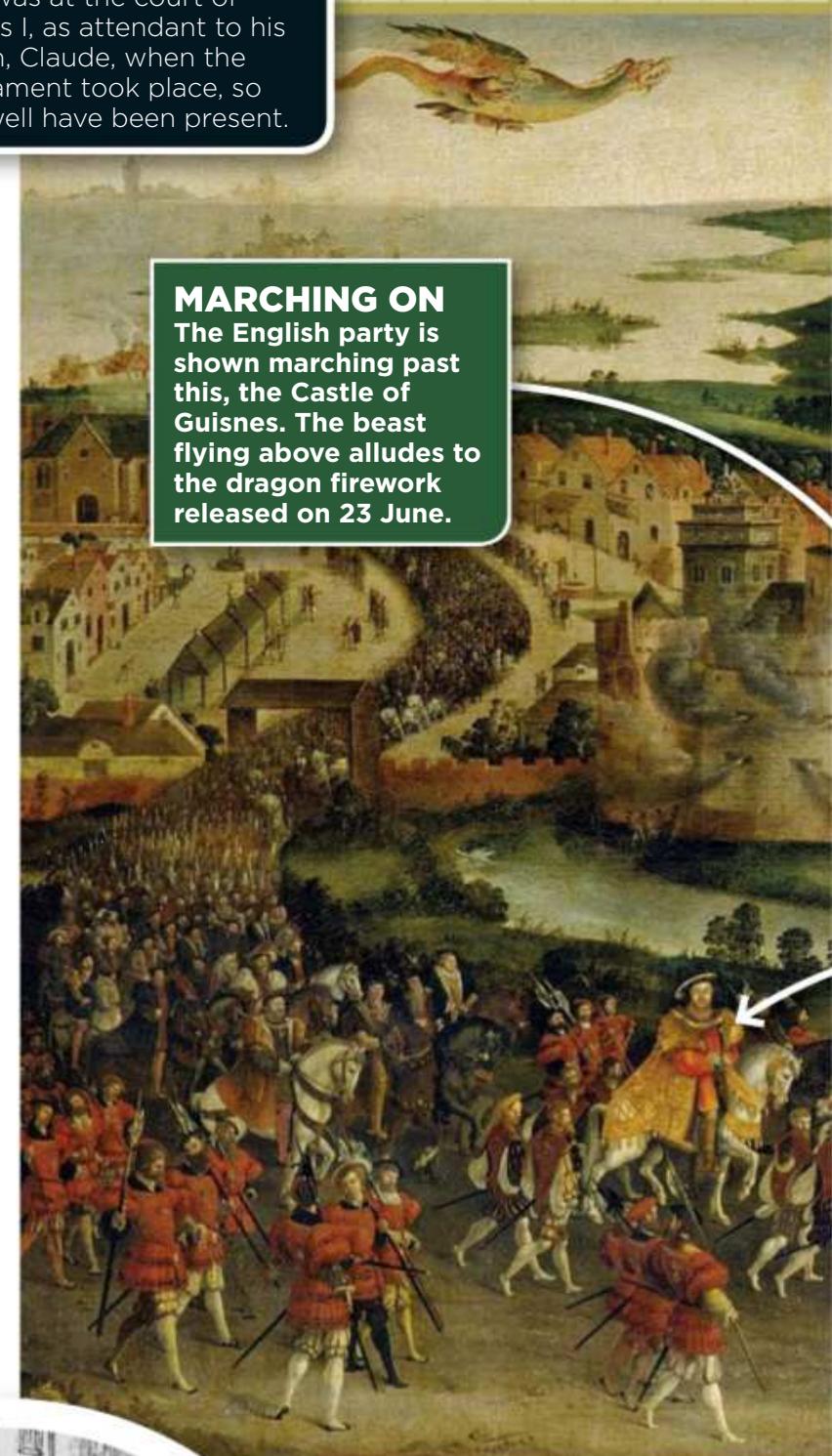
Eleven days of tournament games such as jousting, wrestling and archery took place, along with banquets and firework displays. Two monkeys covered in gold leaf were said to have caused Francis much amusement, while fountains of red wine were set up at the temporary palace.

The two Kings were not meant to compete against each other during the event, but a night of feasting ended abruptly after Henry challenged Francis to a wrestling match. The English King probably regretted his rash move after he lost to his French counterpart.

The three-week event was the talk of Europe and was referred to as the Field of Cloth of Gold. Politically, it did little to unite the countries. Just months after, Henry agreed a treaty with Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. He was forced into conflict with the French the next year, after Charles V declared war on France.

QUEEN TO BE

Anne Boleyn, **Henry's future wife**, was at the court of Francis I, as attendant to his Queen, Claude, when the tournament took place, so may well have been present.



MARCHING ON

The English party is shown marching past this, the Castle of Guisnes. The beast flying above alludes to the dragon firework released on 23 June.

PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE

THE COMMON TOUCH

The arrival of the young, energetic Henry VIII to the throne in 1509 was greeted with excitement among his subjects. Here was a monarch who enjoyed eating, drinking and merriment and who would bring colour to the country. He stood in great contrast to his father, whose reign had been austere. Indeed, there was much celebration when Henry VIII executed two of the much-hated officials responsible for heavy taxation in Henry VII's time: Edmund Dudley and Richard Empson.

Reactions to Henry's break with the Catholic Church after the annulment of his

marriage to Catherine of Aragon seem to have been mixed. A popular protest in 1536, known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, saw around 30,000 people in the north of England rebel against the break, and the subsequent Dissolution of the Monasteries, as well as other specific political, economic and social grievances, many the work of Henry's chief minister Thomas Cromwell. What's more, Anne Boleyn was not a popular choice of Queen for many, and it was widely felt that the King's first wife had been badly treated. But Anne's

execution in May 1536 did little to restore Henry's reputation.

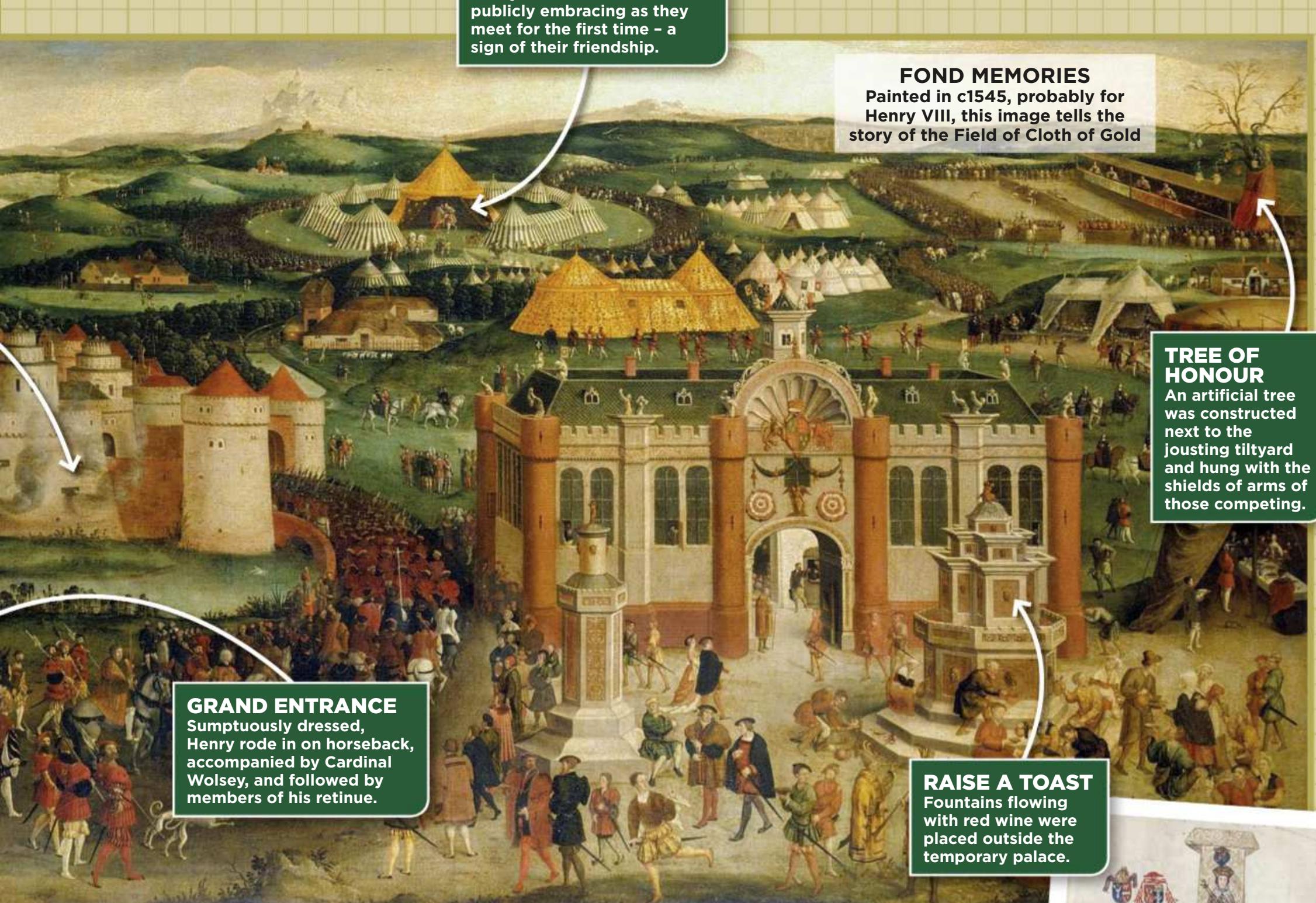
The monarch's excessive spending also saw several attempts to debase England's coinage to pay for expensive wars with France and Scotland. It earned Henry the nickname 'Old Coppernose': the layer of silver on coins became so thin it would wear off, revealing the copper below.



CROWD PLEASER

LEFT: Rebels protest against religious reforms in the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace
BELOW: A silver groat from Henry VIII's reign





HAND OF FRIENDSHIP

Henry and Francis are shown publicly embracing as they meet for the first time – a sign of their friendship.

FOND MEMORIES

Painted in c1545, probably for Henry VIII, this image tells the story of the Field of Cloth of Gold

TREE OF HONOUR

An artificial tree was constructed next to the jousting tiltyard and hung with the shields of arms of those competing.

FOREIGN POLICY

KEEPING THE PEACE

Henry's main rivals were France, under Francis I, and the Habsburg Empire, ruled by the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. At first Henry continued his father's tactic of

treading a careful neutrality with both rulers. That is, until moves to split with Catherine of Aragon raised tensions with Charles V (her nephew).

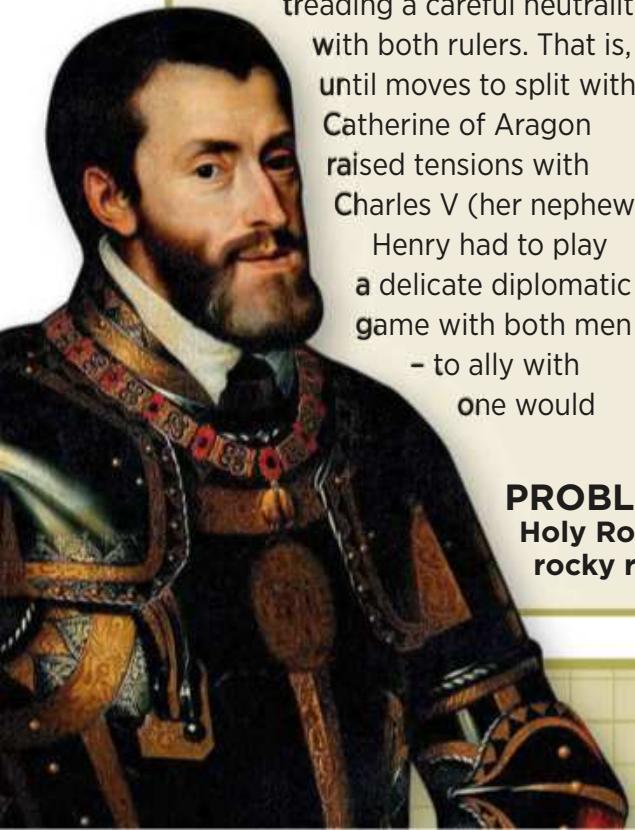
Henry had to play a delicate diplomatic game with both men – to ally with one would

create combined strength but antagonise the other. However, an alliance between Charles and Francis would have been devastating. Nevertheless, Henry went to war with France three times and allied with France against Charles V in 1526.

Closer to home, Scotland was a permanent thorn in Henry's side. The Battle of Flodden, in 1513, was the largest conflict between the two neighbours. It was a decisive English victory that saw the death of Scottish King James IV.

PROBLEMS ABROAD

Holy Roman Emperor Charles V had a rocky relationship with Henry VIII



AT HOME

PROMOTING PARLIAMENT

Parliament was very active under Henry VIII but, unlike the King's Council, which met annually, it was still very much an occasional institution. Henry's 37-year reign saw nine Parliaments sit, for a total of 183 weeks – 136 of these occurred in the last 18 years of his reign and his break with Rome.

But it was the 'Reformation Parliament' (1529-36), that saw the nature of parliament change dramatically. Previously responsible for granting taxation and passing laws, Parliament under Henry VIII began making laws that affected all aspects of national life, including religious



PEOPLE'S KING
Henry VIII, enthroned in the centre, opens Parliament in 1523

practice and doctrine. In 1530, Parliament transferred religious authority from the Pope to the English Crown – a groundbreaking move. Although Parliament could still only sit by the will of the monarch, Henry had learned that royal power was strongest when it was supported by parliamentary statute.

ALL THE KING'S MEN

Getting close to the King could bring riches, power and prestige, but could also lose you your head

Henry's court was designed to reflect the magnificence and pre-eminence of the King and, unlike his father, Henry happily lavished money on creating a court that was the talk of Europe. But his was also a court of intrigue and danger, and it was the job of Henry's closest advisors to guide him in the many decisions he, as monarch, was required to make on a daily basis.

Thomas Wolsey was the first chief minister of Henry's reign. The son of an Ipswich butcher, Wolsey was a self-made man who, after graduating from Magdalen College, Oxford, was ordained into the clergy. Wolsey's administrative skills and devotion to the crown saw him become Henry's most influential advisor. Between 1515 and 1529, Wolsey's power was unparalleled. As Lord Chancellor

Cardinal, his influence spanned both Church and state, and Henry delegated much of the day-to-day running of the country to his trusted companion. But Wolsey's failure to convince the Pope to grant Henry the annulment from his first wife, combined with widespread dislike of his influence over Henry, and his humble roots, led to his eventual downfall. He died in November 1530, en route to his trial for treason.

With Wolsey out of the picture, the scene was set for a new star to ascend: enter Thomas Cromwell, Wolsey's legal secretary, MP and, like his mentor, a man of lowly birth. Hoping to succeed where Wolsey had failed, Cromwell

devised a plan to enable Henry to marry Anne Boleyn, the noblewoman he had fallen desperately in love with. The King, said Cromwell, should break with Rome and place himself as Supreme Head of an English Church.

But should Cromwell be seen as Henry's devoted right-hand man who simply wanted what was best for king and country, or was he an arch-manipulator who stood to gain money, prestige and power by giving Henry what he wanted? Historians are divided, as were contemporaries. Cromwell masterminded the dissolution of the monasteries, creating immense wealth for the Crown, but his proximity to the King and his ability to influence his decisions made him unpopular at court. What's more, his role in the eventual trial and execution of Anne Boleyn has led many to label him a cold, calculating and untrustworthy politician.

PLAYING GOD

Henry had a vast number of people executed for treason, but one of his most **high-profile beheadings** was that of 67-year-old Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury. It took **11 blows** to sever her head from her frail, elderly body.

THOMAS WOLSEY (c1475-1530)
Royal Chaplain to Henry VII, Wolsey's influence continued into the reign of Henry VIII, where his organisational skills and intelligence led to his appointments as Lord Chancellor, Cardinal and Archbishop of York. His death at the age of around 55 saved him from execution.

THOMAS CROMWELL (c1485-1540)
Putney-born Cromwell, the son of a blacksmith, was originally a mercenary with the French army in Italy, but by 1523 had achieved a seat in the House of Commons and found employment in the household of Thomas Wolsey. After eight years as Chief Minister to Henry VIII, he was executed for treason, without trial.

THOMAS CRANMER (1489-1556)
Appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533, it was Cranmer who, on 23 May 1533, declared Henry and Catherine's marriage to be against the will of God. Five days later, he pronounced the five-month marriage of Anne Boleyn and Henry, valid. A devout Protestant, Cranmer went on to serve Edward IV but was burned alive for his beliefs under the reign of the Catholic Mary I.

THOMAS MORE (1478-1535)
Lawyer, scholar and MP, Thomas More was granted the post of Lord Chancellor in 1529. A passionate defender of the Catholic faith, More was executed in 1535 for his refusal to accept Henry's break with the church in Rome and the annulment of the King's first marriage.



MOCK THE MONARCH

Created near the end of the King's lifetime and reproduced after his death, in Massys's portrayal of Henry the monarch has virtually no neck, a pursed mouth and small, **suspicious eyes**.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

This suit of tonlet armour - named for its large metal skirt (tonlet), which protected the upper legs - was worn by Henry at the Field of Cloth of Gold in 1520.



AGEING PROCESS

LEFT: A rather unflattering engraving of Henry VIII by Cornelis Massys, c1545-8
ABOVE: Two sets of armour belonging to Henry VIII. As his girth expanded, so too did his armour

HEAVY METAL

Weighing in at more than 35kg - about the equivalent of five car tyres - this hefty armour was made for the considerably rounder 49-year-old Henry, but may never have been worn.

5

HENRY'S DOWNFALL

As the King's weight accelerated and his health worsened, few could remember the golden years of his youth

Henry appears to have enjoyed fine health as a young man. Despite perhaps suffering a bout of smallpox in 1514 and occasional episodes of malaria (a disease endemic in English marshlands from 1521), contemporary sources rave about the King's fitness and health. But it was Henry's penchant for sport that may have triggered his metamorphosis into the obese, cruel, tyrannical ruler of his later years.

In January 1536, Henry, aged 44, was unseated from his horse during a joust. He crashed to the ground, his fully-armoured horse landing on top of him, crushing his legs. Although he

recovered from his injuries, Henry suffered from persistent headaches and his leg wounds became ulcerated. These were treated with a variety of different methods, including lancing with red-hot pokers, but they would plague him for the rest of his life. By 1543, the stench from his infected ulcers could allegedly be identified three rooms away.

Henry's court had always been prone to excess, and the monarch was known to have a massive appetite for meat, pastries and wine. Unable to exercise in the wake of his accident and reluctant to curb his appetite, Henry's weight increased dramatically. In his 20s he is thought to have weighed around 15 stone, boasting a slim 42-inch waist; by the time of his death in 1547, he

is believed to have weighed 28 stone and his waist had expanded to a whopping 52 inches.

Henry's quality of life was no doubt affected by the constant pain of his ulcerated legs, and his latter years are characterized by frequent rages, cruelty and an unpredictable temperament. Some historians have attributed Henry's mood and behavioural changes to the head injuries he sustained in his jousting accident. Certainly, during the later years of his reign Henry grew ever more paranoid and bad-tempered, suffering from insomnia and crippling migraines.

Another theory is that Henry suffered from a hormonal disorder known as Cushing's Disease, which could explain his weight gain, slow-healing ulcers and the impotence he is said to have experienced during his marriage to his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves.

8,200

The number of sheep consumed by Henry and his courtiers while in residence at Hampton Court Palace

TIMELINE Henry VIII: boy

Henry's life was a rollercoaster of romance, with plenty of treacherous plots,

28 JUNE 1491

Henry is born at Greenwich Palace, London, the third child and second son of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. His birth helps to secure the Tudor dynasty.



14 NOVEMBER 1501

Prince Arthur, heir to the English throne, marries Catherine of Aragon – the bride is escorted by ten-year-old Henry. Less than six months later Arthur is dead, possibly of the sweating sickness.

11 JUNE 1509

Two months after acceding the throne, Henry marries his brother's widow. Their only surviving child, Mary, is born seven years later.



9 SEPTEMBER 1513

Henry's forces defeat a Scottish invasion at the Battle of Flodden.

29 MAY 1536

Anne Boleyn is executed at the Tower of London. Henry marries Jane Seymour just 11 days later.

12 OCTOBER 1537

Henry's long-awaited son, Edward, is born but his mother, Jane Seymour, dies just days later.



1536

The Dissolution of the Monasteries begins under Thomas Cromwell. The move provokes uprisings in the North, known as the Pilgrimage of Grace.



24 JANUARY 1536

Henry suffers a serious accident while jousting. The incident triggers long-term health problems for the King and he never jousts again.



NOVEMBER 1534

The Act of Supremacy is passed, establishing the King as the supreme head of the Church of England.

25 JANUARY 1533

Henry marries a pregnant Anne Boleyn, before his marriage to Catherine of Aragon is annulled. The future Elizabeth I is born in September the same year.



1540
Henry marries Anne of Cleves in January, but annuls the marriage six months later. Waltham Abbey becomes the last monastery to be dissolved.



28 JULY 1540
Thomas Cromwell is executed for treason. Henry marries his fifth wife, Catherine Howard (some 30 years his junior), the very same day.

13 FEBRUARY 1542

Catherine Howard is executed for adultery. She is said to have spent the night before her execution practising how to lay her head on the block.

Prince to King

tragic turns and political twists along the way



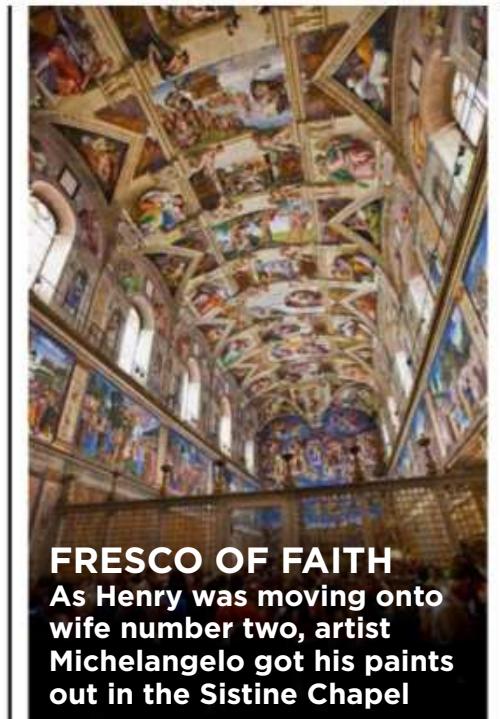
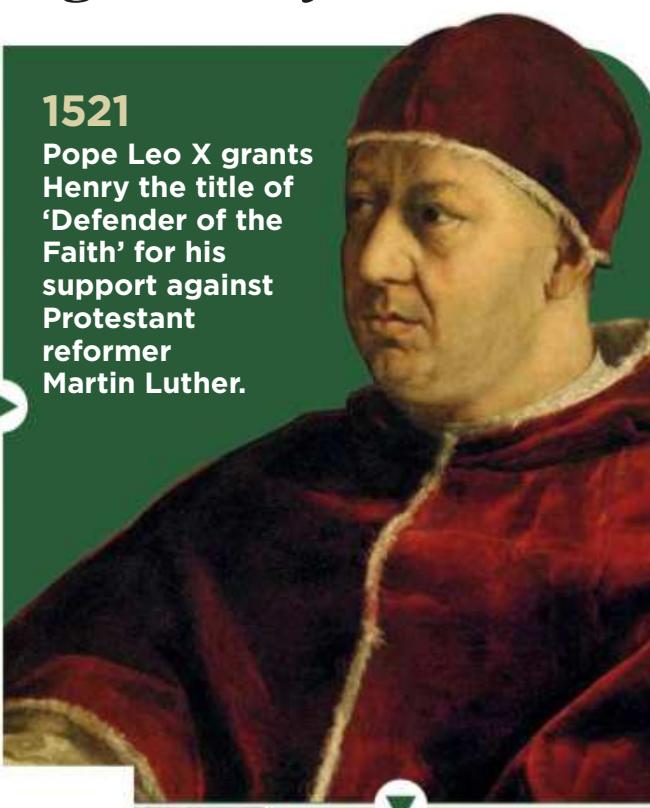
1515

Thomas Wolsey, the son of an Ipswich butcher, is appointed Lord Chancellor and also Cardinal. He steadily becomes one of the most powerful ministers in English history.



1521

Pope Leo X grants Henry the title of 'Defender of the Faith' for his support against Protestant reformer Martin Luther.

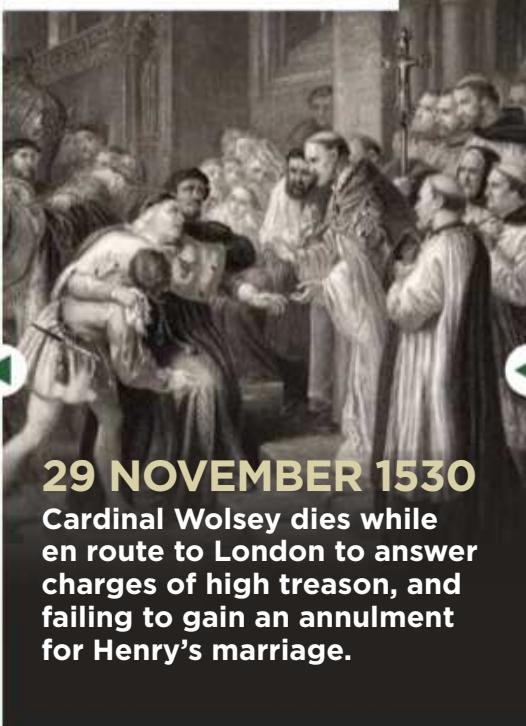


FRESCO OF FAITH
As Henry was moving onto wife number two, artist Michelangelo got his paints out in the Sistine Chapel



1531

Halley's Comet is spotted in the sky, causing widespread panic and talk of holy retribution.



1522

Following her return from the French court, Anne Boleyn is appointed lady-in-waiting to Catherine of Aragon.

NEWS OF THE WORLD ELSEWHERE IN THE 1500s

While Henry was doing battle with the Pope for religious supremacy, the rest of the world was undergoing revolutions of its own – from arts to trade and religion to war.

In Italy, Leonardo da Vinci had started to paint the *Mona Lisa*, a work he completed c1506-7. His contemporary, Michelangelo, meanwhile, had started work on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. His fresco, *The Last Judgement*, was ordered by Pope Clement VII just days before his death in 1534.

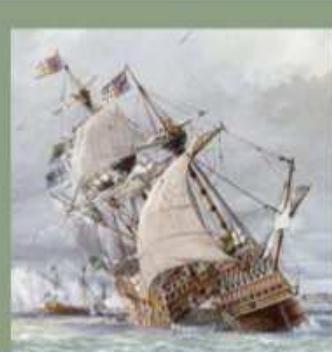
Elsewhere, in 1530s Peru, a vicious civil war was raging between brothers Atahualpa and Huascar for control over the Inca Empire. While in 1500, the Sikh religion was born in what is now Pakistan, and soon spread across India, Tibet and Arabia through the word of Guru Nanak.

In 1539, trading monopolies in Japan came to an end and a free market was established. And, four years before Henry's death, Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus published his work explaining that the Earth and planets revolve around the Sun.



12 JULY 1543

Henry marries the twice-widowed Catherine Parr, his sixth and final wife. His bride vows "to be gentle and courteous, and buxom in bed and in board".



28 JANUARY 1547

Henry dies at the Palace of Whitehall after a period of illness, aged 55. His last words are said to be "Monks! Monks! Monks!"

14 DECEMBER 1542

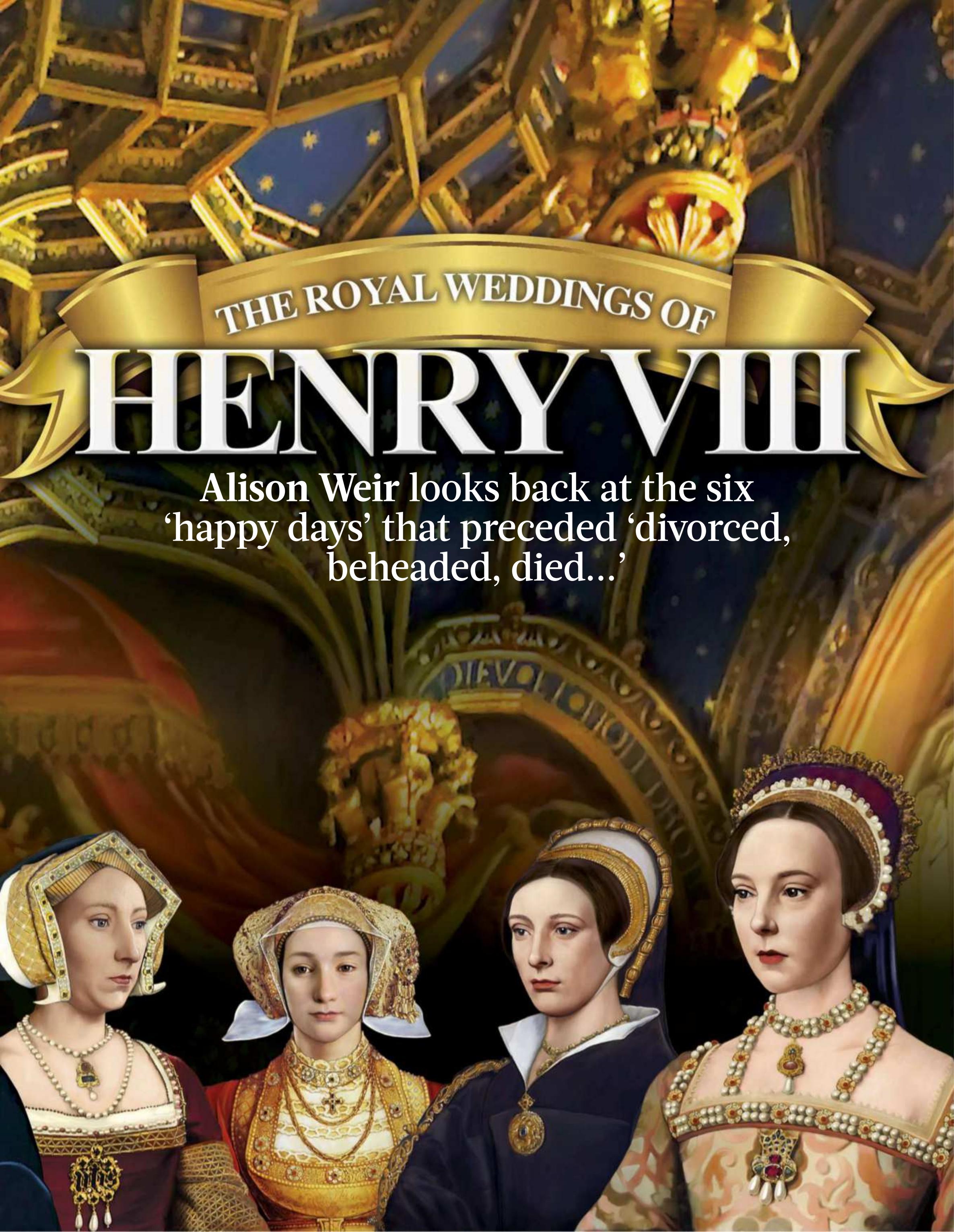
James V of Scotland dies and is succeeded by his six-day-old daughter Mary, Queen of Scots.

19 JULY 1545
Tudor warship the *Mary Rose* sinks in the Solent during an attack against a French invasion. The event is witnessed by the King himself.



ILLUSTRATION: JEAN-MICHEL GIRARD/WWW.THE-ART-AGENCY.CO.UK

Henry's marriages set the backdrop for his descent from a charming prince to a ruthless tyrant



THE ROYAL WEDDINGS OF

HENRY VIII

Alison Weir looks back at the six
'happy days' that preceded 'divorced,
beheaded, died...'





Henry VIII and his first wife Katherine of Aragon, painted c1520. She was the widow of the King's late elder brother, Arthur

Today, we associate royal weddings with great public celebrations, a grand procession, a magnificent ceremony in Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral or St George's Chapel at Windsor, and a public appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace. But this is not a tradition leading back down the centuries to England's most married monarch, Henry VIII, and beyond. The modern royal wedding, as we know it, dates only from 1840, when Queen Victoria married Prince Albert. Prior to that, royal weddings were usually private affairs, solemnised in the royal chapels with little public fanfare.

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X2, GETTY XI

KATHERINE OF ARAGON

Henry VIII's six weddings were all private. When, not quite 18, he became king in 1509, it was a matter of political and dynastic necessity that he marry and beget an heir as soon as possible, to ensure the continuation of the Tudor dynasty.

Surviving members of the rival House of York arguably had a better claim to the throne than Henry, and the spectre of the Wars of the Roses still loomed large.

The new King's councillors urged him to marry Katherine of Aragon, the Spanish princess to whom he had been betrothed since 1503 and the widow of his late elder brother, Arthur, Prince of Wales. Katherine had a great dowry, and the prospect of war with France – England's hereditary enemy – made an alliance with Spain all the more desirable. Her father, King Ferdinand of

Aragon, was pressing Henry to marry her immediately, and promising him many political advantages if he did so.

But Henry hesitated. He was uneasy in his conscience, wondering if he would commit a sin by marrying the widow of his deceased brother, as such unions were forbidden in Scripture. King Ferdinand hastened to reassure him that the marriage would be perfectly lawful, as the Pope had given a dispensation for it. He felt certain that Henry would enjoy the greatest happiness with Katherine, and leave numerous children behind him.

The Privy Council also put pressure on the King. "We have the Pope's dispensation," they said. "Will you be more scrupulous than he is?"

Henry agreed that there were many good reasons for the marriage. Above all, he declared, he desired Katherine above all women; he loved her and longed to wed her. Despite her six years' seniority, he found her attractive, with her long golden hair and fair skin, her

DID YOU KNOW?

The early years of Katherine's marriage were marked by her constant promotion of her father's interests to the inexperienced Henry – to the great chagrin of the King's councillors



Katherine had frequent run-ins with Cardinal Wolsey, whom she found insincere and lacking in humility

“WHAT HENRY FELT FOR HER SEEKS TO HAVE BEEN LOVE IN ITS MOST CHIVALROUS FORM”

officiating. Katherine wore virginal white, with her long hair loose under a gold circlet.

After the nuptials, the small wedding party proceeded to the chapel of the Observant Friars adjacent to the palace to hear Mass. There is no record of Henry and his new Queen being publicly put to bed together, as was generally the custom, but there was never any doubt that the marriage was consummated that night, for Katherine became pregnant immediately.

If, as the evidence strongly suggests, she had emerged from her first marriage *virgo intacta*, the chances are that Henry too was a virgin on his wedding night. There is no suggestion in any source that he was sexually active before his accession. He had led an almost cloistered life, closely supervised by his father and his tutors, and it is likely there had been no opportunities for dalliances with girls.

The marriage of Henry and Katherine was proclaimed four days later, on 15 June. On that same day Katherine first appeared at court as Queen of England.

She had adopted as her personal badge the pomegranate, a symbol of fertility since ancient times, and yet she failed to bear Henry the son he needed to ensure the succession. Of her six known children only one, the Princess Mary, survived infancy. At that time, it was unthinkable that a woman should rule England and wield dominion over men. By 1524, it was known that the Queen would bear no more children, and by 1526, Henry had fallen passionately in love with her maid-of-honour, the vivacious, accomplished and ambitious Anne Boleyn.

In 1527, Henry began to voice doubts that his marriage to his brother's widow was lawful, and asked the Pope for an annulment, only to be kept dangling in hope for the next seven years. By then, frustrated and alienated, he had broken with Rome and declared himself Supreme Head of the Church of England, and Thomas Cranmer, his new Archbishop of Canterbury, had declared Henry's union with Katherine null and void, and confirmed his marriage to Anne Boleyn. Henry had not waited for the formalities.

dignity, lineage and graciousness.

Everything about her proclaimed her a fit mate for the King of England.

What Henry felt for her seems to have been love in its most chivalrous form, coupled with deep respect. And honour demanded that he marry her and, like a knight errant of old, rescue her from the penury in which his father had kept her, and so win her love and gratitude. It was a grand gesture that appealed vastly to the King's youthful conceit.

HAPPY BEGINNINGS

One day in early June, 1509, the King arrived at Katherine's apartments in Greenwich Palace. He came alone, dismissed her attendants and, raising her from her curtsey, declared his love for her, and asked her to be his queen. Without hesitation, she joyfully agreed.

They were married on 11 June, the feast day of St Barnabas, in the Queen's closet at Greenwich, with William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury,

Thomas More penned a suite of poems to mark the marriage; he would remain a great friend to Katherine, united by their shared religious conservatism





“ANNE’S FAILURE TO BEAR A SON LAID HER OPEN TO THE MACHINATIONS OF HER ENEMIES, WHO DID THEIR BEST TO EXPLOIT HENRY’S INCREASING INTEREST IN JANE SEYMOUR”

GETTY X2, MOVIE STILLS X1



ANNE BOLEYN

The precise date of Henry's marriage to Anne is a matter of dispute. A Milanese envoy in France thought that they had married during their visit to Calais in October 1532, but the chronicler Edward Hall claimed: “The King, after his return, married privily the Lady Anne Boleyn on Saint Erkenwald's Day, which marriage was kept so secret that very few knew of it.” The feast of the translation of St Erkenwald fell on 14 November, the day after Henry and Anne returned to England, but it is highly unlikely that they wed while journeying through Kent towards Eltham Palace, especially in view of the testimony of two people who were much closer to events than Edward Hall.

“The King's marriage was celebrated, it was reported, on the day of the conversion of St Paul (January 1533),” the Imperial ambassador wrote on 10 May 1533, while Archbishop Cranmer stated, in a letter dated 17 June 1533, that Anne was “married much about St Paul's Day last, as the condition thereof doth well appear, by reason she is now somewhat big with child”.

Hall, who revered Henry VIII, would not have wanted to imply that the daughter Anne bore on 7 September 1533, had been conceived out of

wedlock. His dating of the wedding to the previous November was either based on incorrect information or was a tactful, deliberate error. There can be little doubt that it was the discovery that Anne might be pregnant that prompted the King to pre-empt the Pope and marry her.

A SECRET CEREMONY

Just before dawn on 25 January 1533, a small group of people gathered in Henry's private chapel in Whitehall Palace for his secret wedding to Anne.

"It has been reported throughout a great part of the realm that I married her, which was plainly false," Cranmer protested, "for I myself knew not thereof a fortnight after it was done." The officiating priest was either Dr Rowland Lee, one of the royal chaplains, or George Brown, Prior of the Austin Friars in London.

Possibly the priest was informed that the Pope had sanctioned the marriage; a royal envoy had just returned from Rome, leading some to suspect that the

DID YOU KNOW?

After her marriage was declared unlawful, Katherine was moved into retirement away from court. Incensed, her nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, refused to recognise Anne as Queen.



Pope had given his tacit consent. As far as Henry was concerned, he had never been lawfully married at all and was free to enter into wedlock at will.

The few witnesses were all sworn to silence. The marriage, and Anne's pregnancy, remained strictly guarded secrets until Easter Sunday 1533, when, "loaded with diamonds and other precious stones", she went "in royal state, openly as queen" to her closet to hear Mass, with 60 maids of honour

Anne's path from spouse stealer to jilted wife is oft-explored in TV and films, like *Wolf Hall*

following her. Having at long last won her King, she had adopted for her motto the legend 'The most happy'.

Her marriage lasted little more than three years. Her failure to bear a son laid her open to the machinations of her enemies, who did their best to exploit the King's increasing interest in Anne's maid-of-honour, Jane Seymour. Accused of betraying Henry with five men, one her own brother, and plotting to assassinate him, she was beheaded on 19 May 1536. >



Anne arrived at court as maid-of-honour to Katherine, and quickly impressed herself on the increasingly ardent Henry

Jane gave Henry the son for whom he had cast aside two queens already



JANE SEYMOUR

Henry VIII was at Whitehall Palace when the Tower guns signalled that he was a free man. Immediately, he had himself rowed to Chelsea, where Jane Seymour was waiting. Their affair had been gathering momentum since the autumn.

The Privy Council had already petitioned Henry to venture once more into holy wedlock, pleading the uncertainty surrounding the succession, for both the King's daughters had been declared bastards. A speedy marriage was both desirable and necessary, and on the day Anne's head fell, Henry's imminent betrothal to Jane Seymour was announced to the Council. At nine o'clock the next morning, they were formally betrothed at Hampton Court in a ceremony lasting a few minutes.

Henry and Jane were married on 30 May at Whitehall Palace. The



ceremony took place in the Queen's closet, with Archbishop Cranmer officiating. Afterwards, Jane sat enthroned under the canopy of estate in the presence chamber. Some thought it strange that, "within one and the same month that saw Queen Anne flourishing, accused, condemned and executed,

another was assumed into her place, both of bed and honour".

Jane died in October 1537, after presenting Henry with his longed-for son, Edward. He mourned her deeply, but 'framed his mind' to marry again for the good of his realm.

The dispensation permitting Henry to marry Jane, barely seven months after they met; Anne had waited seven years

ANNE OF CLEVES

After a long search for a suitable bride, Henry decided upon a German princess, Anne of Cleves. It was a political alliance, made to counterbalance that made between the Holy Roman Emperor and the King of France, which left Henry isolated in Europe and needing the friendship of the German princes.

But when he saw Anne, he knew he could never love her. He did everything he could to wriggle out of the contract, but in vain, and on 6 January 1540, he reluctantly prepared himself for his wedding at Greenwich Palace.

"Is there none other remedy, but that I must needs, against my will, put my neck in the yoke?" he growled. Nevertheless, he dressed magnificently for his wedding in a furred gown of cloth of gold with great flowers of silver, "his coat crimson satin slashed and embroidered, and tied with great diamonds, and a rich collar about his neck".

When his chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, who had arranged the marriage, attended him in his presence chamber, Henry muttered, "My lord, if it were not to satisfy the world and my realm, I would not do that I must do this day for none earthly thing."

I LIKE HER NOT

Informed that his bride was coming, he proceeded to the chapel gallery. At eight o'clock, Anne appeared, sumptuously attired in "a gown of rich cloth of gold set full of large flowers of great Orient pearl, made after the Dutch fashion round, her hair hanging down, which was fair, yellow and long; and on her head a coronal of gold replenished with great stone". She was bedecked with sprigs of rosemary, which symbolised love, fidelity and fertility, and about her neck and waist were costly jewels.

Preceded by Cromwell, and walking between the German envoys with a most demure countenance, she made three low curtsies to Henry, and together they proceeded into the Chapel Royal, where Cranmer was waiting to perform the ceremony.

The King made no protest. Both he and Anne answered freely that they knew of no impediment to the marriage. On her finger, he placed a ring engraved with the motto 'God send me well to keep'.

After Cranmer had blessed them and wished them a fruitful union, Henry and his new Queen went hand in hand into the King's closet to hear Mass. Cranmer

gave the kiss of peace to Anne, upon which the King in turn kissed and embraced her. Afterwards, they were served wine and spices.

Thus "passed that day honourably". The newly wedded pair were ceremonially put to bed together to do their dynastic duty. The marital bedstead had an oak headboard with erotic carvings of priapic and pregnant cherubs, but they had little effect on Henry. The marriage was not consummated.

The next morning, the King complained to Cromwell that he "abhorred" Anne. "Surely, my lord, as ye know, I liked her before not well, but now I like her much worse, for I have felt her belly and her breasts, and thereby, as I can judge, she should be no maid, which so strake me to the heart when I felt them that I had neither will nor courage to proceed any further in other matters."

He made similar complaints to other courtiers, on many occasions. Possibly he was only saying what he believed to be the truth. Most likely he wanted an excuse for not consummating the marriage, so that it could be annulled without difficulty as soon as grounds could be found. As indeed they were, and in July 1540 it was dissolved. >



After the annulment, Anne was referred to as 'the King's Beloved Sister'



Henry accepted Anne on the basis of this portrait, but it was painted from the most flattering angle

BRITISH ROYAL WEDDINGS THROUGH HISTORY

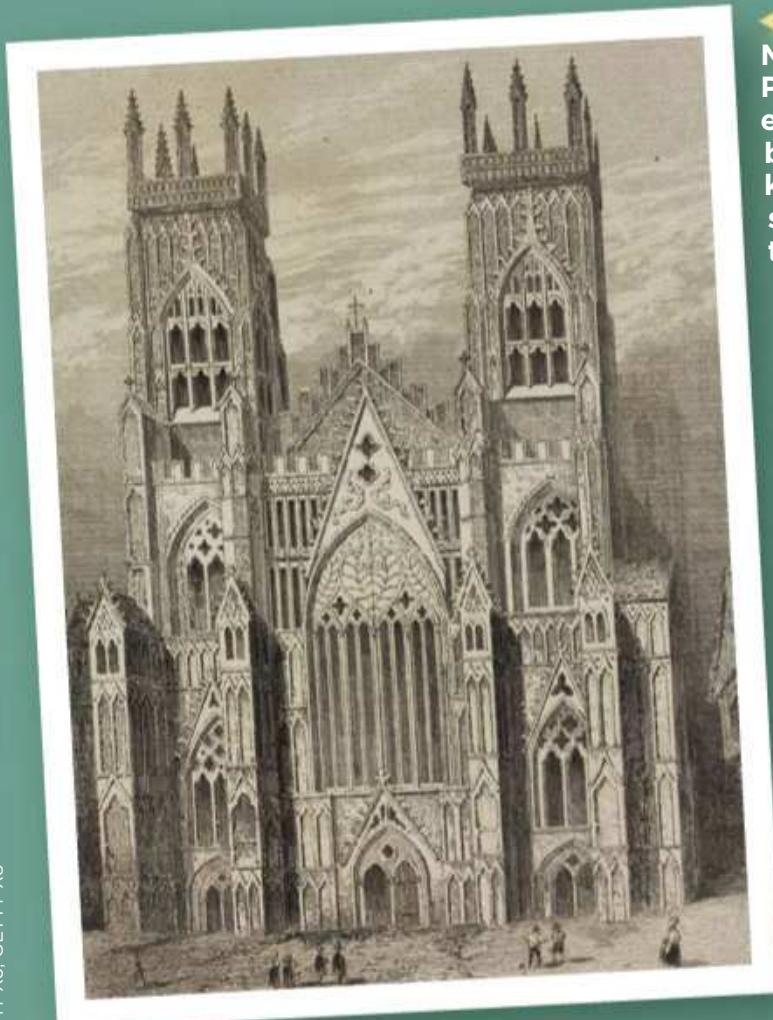


► The first royal to be married in Westminster Abbey was Henry I in 1100. It has hosted over a dozen royal weddings since, most recently that of Prince William and Kate Middleton.



► Edward IV kept his marriage to Elizabeth Woodville a secret, as she was a widow and commoner. The exact date of their 1464 wedding is still debated.

► The teenage Princess Augusta really didn't want to go ahead with the planned marriage to the Prince of Wales, Frederick, in 1736. While on the way to the ceremony, she pleaded with her mother, "Please don't leave me", and was sick immediately afterwards.



► Edward III chose York Minster for his wedding to Philippa of Hainault in 1328, even though it was still being built and had no roof. The king got a white wedding of sorts, as it snowed during the ceremony.

► The oldest surviving royal wedding dress belonged to Princess Charlotte, daughter of George IV, who married Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld. It cost over £10,000 (around £400,000 today).



► Henry VII considered a marriage between James IV of Scotland and his daughter, Margaret – a five-year-old. She was betrothed (by proxy) in 1502, when she was 12 years old. Margaret didn't meet her husband until the following year.





▲ We have Queen Victoria to thank for the white wedding dress. Although not the first to wear white, her wedding to Albert on 10 February 1840 set the bar that all other brides had to match. Before then, any colour could be worn, including the rather funereal black.



▲ There has been no shortage of scandalous royal match-ups, but when Edward VIII announced his desire to wed Wallis Simpson, twice divorced already, it led to a constitutional crisis. In 1936, Edward abdicated the throne.

1840

1923

1936

1947

1960

1981

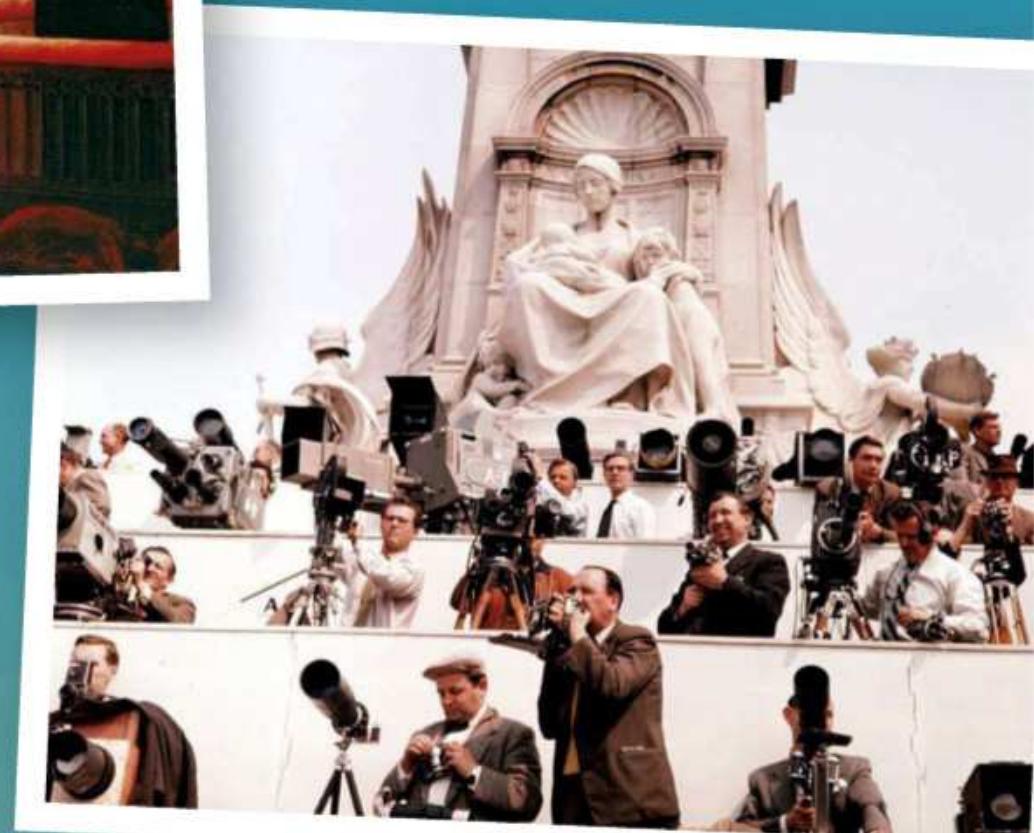
The future George VI proposed three times before Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon agreed to marry him. The wedding took place in 1923, and it was made a public event to lift national morale in the wake of World War I.

▲ Elizabeth II's wedding cake was a towering nine feet high, over four tiers – enough for all 2,000 guests to have a slice.



▲ Diana Spencer was so nervous at her 1981 wedding to Prince Charles that she mixed up his name during the ceremony, calling him 'Philip Charles'.

▼ The first royal wedding to be televised was in 1960, when Princess Margaret, the Queen's sister, married photographer Antony Armstrong-Jones.



KATHERINE HOWARD

By then, Henry had fallen for a pretty 19-year-old brunette, Katherine Howard. She was a niece of the Duke of Norfolk, England's premier Catholic peer. Norfolk and his party had put her in the King's path because they wanted to see a good Catholic queen on the throne; Henry quickly became besotted and resolved to wed Katherine.

Today, what remains of the Palace of Oatlands lies beneath a housing estate in Weybridge, Surrey. It was a favoured retreat of Henry's, and he took Katherine there for their wedding, solemnised in private on 28 July 1540 by Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London. For ten days, absolute secrecy was maintained.

Infatuated with his bride, the King wanted to spend time alone with her before showing her off to the world.

At last, it seemed, he had found a wife who embodied the qualities he most admired in women: beauty, charm, a pleasant disposition and, he believed, virtue. He considered himself blessed. Whether Katherine was as elated is a matter for conjecture, for her husband was prematurely aged at nearly 50, with a waist of 54 inches and a putrid leg.

DANGEROUS SECRETS

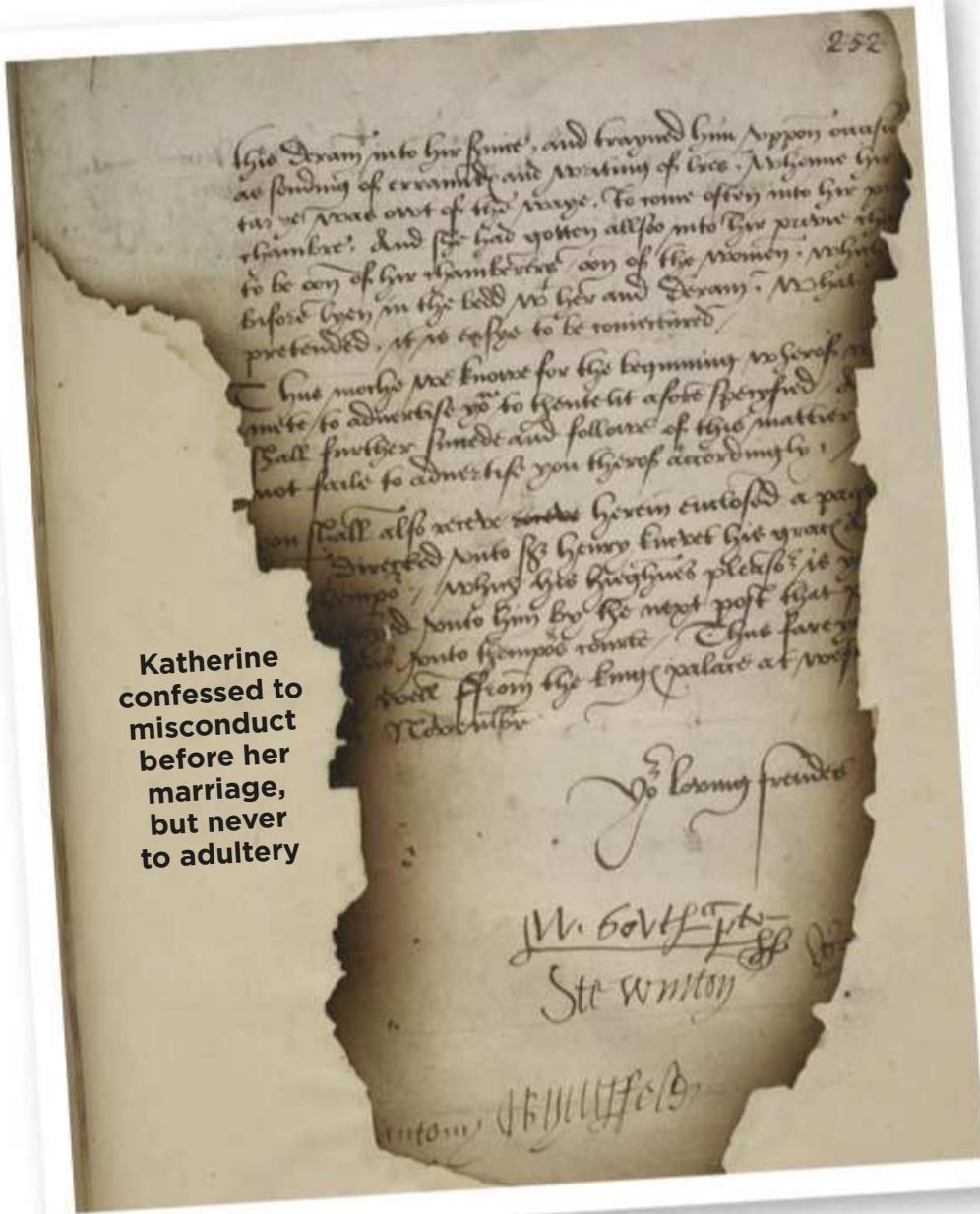
But Katherine had a past of which Henry knew nothing, and it increasingly came back to haunt her. In 1541, evidence of sexual liaisons before her marriage, and adultery after, came to light. Henry broke down in tears in council, then called for a sword with which to slay her whom he had worshipped. She was executed in February 1542.

The tragedy left Henry miserable and lonely, but in no hurry to remarry. That was as well, because, according to the Imperial ambassador, there were few ladies at court hastening to aspire to such an honour.

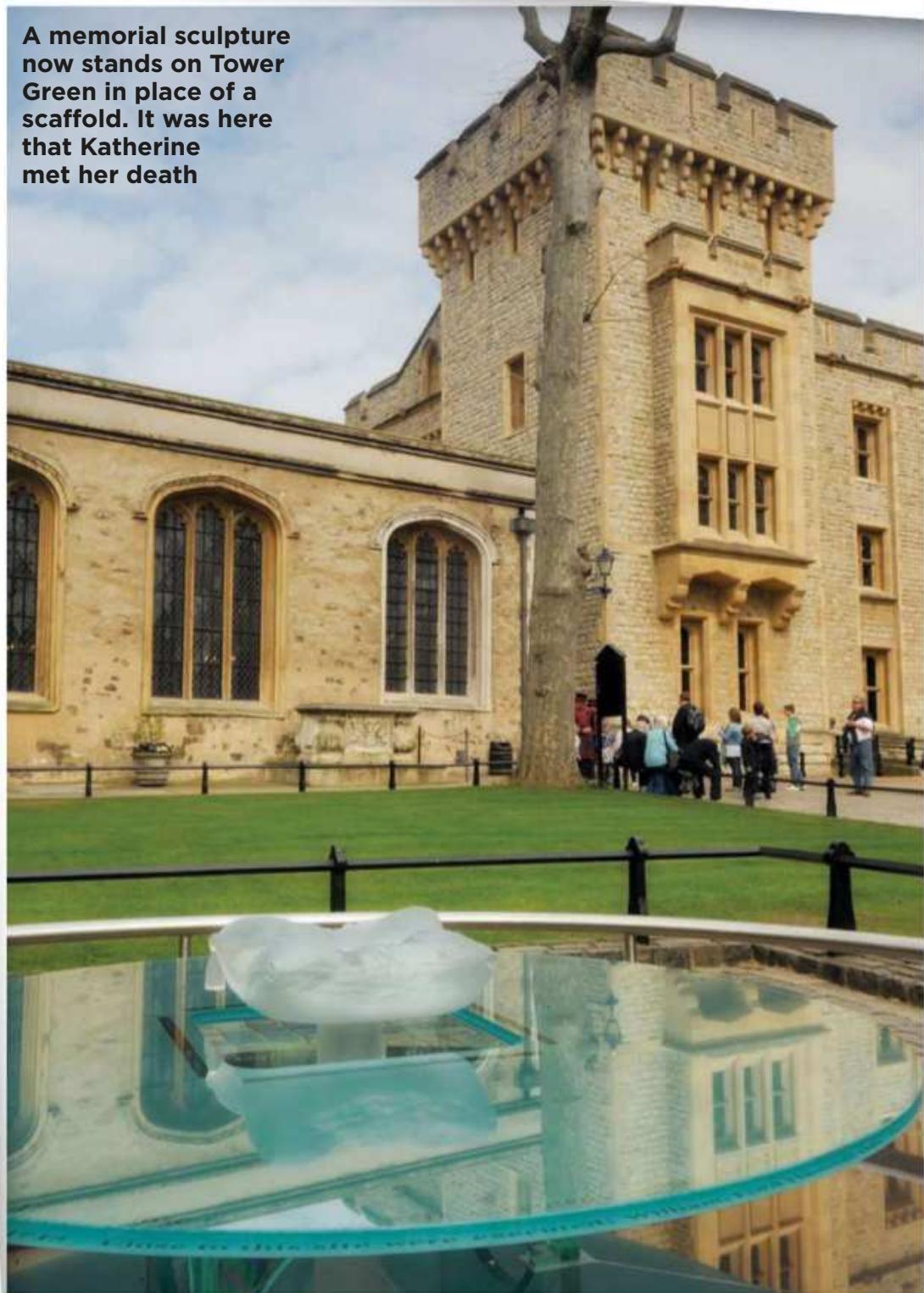


Katherine garnered a reputation as a frivolous character who cared only for pretty clothes

"HENRY BROKE DOWN IN TEARS, THEN CALLED FOR A SWORD"



A memorial sculpture now stands on Tower Green in place of a scaffold. It was here that Katherine met her death





MAIN: Katherine married a fourth time, after Henry's death, to the King's rival Sir Thomas Seymour
RIGHT: She stood her ground with the decrepit Henry over religious issues

“SNIFFING A RIVAL, HENRY SENT SEYMOUR ABROAD AND CLAIMED KATHERINE FOR HIMSELF”



KATHERINE PARR

As time passed, and his spirits lightened, Henry began to seek a companion for his declining years, and proposed marriage to Katherine Parr, a comely, intelligent widow of 30.

Katherine was reluctant to marry the King because, having been wife in turn to a sick boy and a sick man, she had looked to wed the gallant Sir Thomas Seymour, Queen Jane's brother. Henry, sniffing a rival, sent Seymour abroad and claimed Katherine for himself.

On 10 July 1543, Archbishop Cranmer issued a special licence for their marriage and, two days later, the wedding took place privately in the Queen's closet at Hampton Court, amid much rejoicing. The King's niece, Lady Margaret Douglas, was the bride's chief attendant. When the King was asked if he would take Katherine Parr to be his lawful wife, he answered "Yea", "with a joyful countenance".

BELOVED STEPMOTHER

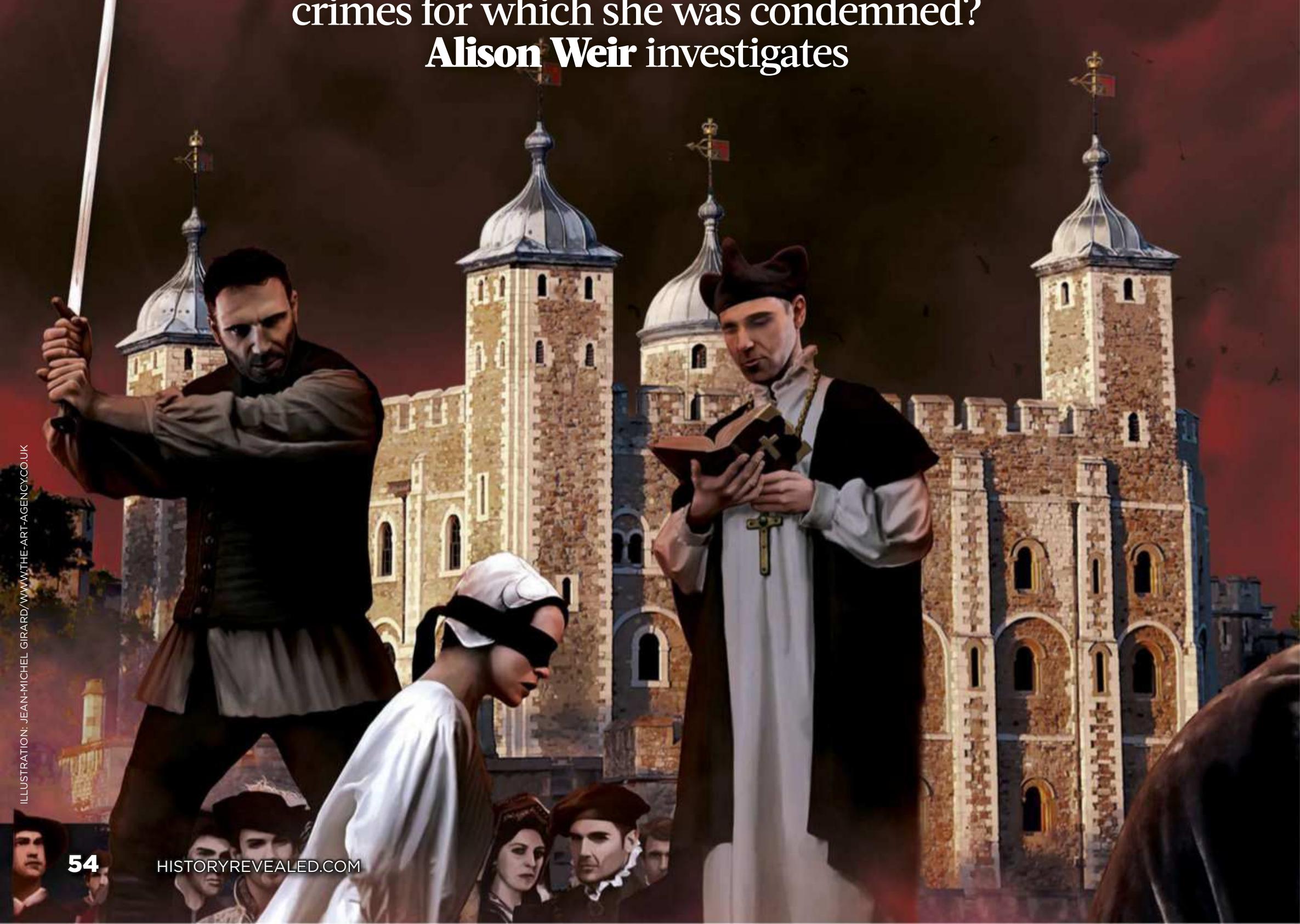
Katherine proved an admirable queen, and a loving stepmother to Henry's children, who were all fond of her. She was popular, and it was said that every day was like a Sunday at her court. Such was the King's trust in her that, when he invaded France in 1544, he appointed her Regent of England in his absence. When he died in 1547, he left her a wealthy widow.

Henry VIII's matrimonial career shows that the outward trappings of royal nuptials were only half of the story – the velvet glove, rather than the iron fist inside – and belied the fact that the celebrations attending his weddings would be remembered as the ceremonial cover for an unholy and sometimes brutal alliance. ◎

THE LAST DAYS OF ANNE BOLEYN

It is said that the Queen of England laughed in the face of death. But was she guilty of the crimes for which she was condemned?

Alison Weir investigates



CHANGE OF HEART

Henry VIII's affair with Anne Boleyn transformed the face of Europe, but why did she fall so dramatically out of the King's favour?





NO BEAUTY QUEEN

In 1532, a Venetian ambassador described Anne as "not one of the handsomest women in the world. She is of middling stature, with a swarthy complexion, long neck, wide mouth, bosom not much raised, and in fact has nothing but the King's great appetite, and her eyes, which are black and beautiful - and take great effect on those who served the Queen when she was on the throne."



On 2 May 1536, Anne Boleyn was arrested at Greenwich Palace and conveyed by barge to the Tower of London. Arriving at the Court Gate in the Byward Tower – not Traitors' Gate – she was in a fragile state. Falling to her knees, she beseeched God to help her, protesting that she was not guilty of the crimes for which she had been convicted. She would have been aware that it was rare for anyone accused of treason to escape condemnation and death.

The lords who had brought her committed her to the custody of Sir William Kingston, the Constable of the Tower, who conducted her to her lodging. "I was received with greater ceremony the last time I entered here," she observed, recalling how she had come to the Tower in triumph before her crowning in 1533. "Mr Kingston, do I go into a dungeon?"

"No, Madam, you shall go into your lodging that you lay in at your coronation," the Constable told her. He was referring to the Queen's apartments in the royal palace.

"It is too good for me!" Anne cried. "Jesu, have mercy on me!"

Anne Boleyn's story is one of the most dramatic in English history. Well-born but not conventionally beautiful, at 21 she arrived at the English court after

spending seven years in France, and her French manners, her stylish dress and her wit and charm made her an immediate success.

By 1526, Henry VIII had fallen passionately in love with her, and the following year he resolved to set aside his chaste and devoted wife, Katherine of Aragon, who had failed to give him a male heir, and marry Anne. There followed six long years of frustration, in which the Pope prevaricated over granting an annulment.

In the end, a disillusioned Henry broke with Rome, declared himself Supreme Head of the Church of England, and, in 1533, had his union with Katherine declared invalid, and his secret marriage to Anne proclaimed lawful.

But the child with which she was then pregnant, meant to be the long-awaited prince, turned out to be a girl, Elizabeth. This was a cataclysmic disappointment, for it had not yet been proved that a woman could rule successfully, as Elizabeth later did as queen of England, and it was seen as against natural

"Her reputation in the country at large, and Catholic Europe, was notorious"

and divine law for a woman to wield dominion over men.

During the three years she was queen, Anne remained influential, but her continued failure to bear a male heir undermined her power. In January 1536, after two failed pregnancies, she miscarried of a son, to the King's crushing disappointment. It laid her open to the machinations of her enemies, who were legion, not only at court, but throughout the country, where she was widely regarded as the "goggle-eyed whore" who had displaced the good Queen Katherine. The stage was set for her fall, which caused a sensation in its time.



Henry fell in love with Anne when she was serving as a maid-of-honour to Katherine of Aragon



The fall of Anne Boleyn has long been seen by many as the direct result of a marital breakdown, but that is too simplistic an interpretation. Moreover, the evidence strongly suggests that it was the King's principal secretary, Thomas Cromwell, rather than Henry VIII, who was the prime mover in the matter.

FLIRTING WITH DANGER

In April 1536, it appeared to Cromwell that the Queen, his deadly enemy, had recovered her ascendancy over the King at a time when he himself had incurred Henry's displeasure. She had also made it publicly clear, through a sermon preached by her almoner on Passion Sunday, that "wicked ministers" should be executed. It would be his neck, or hers.

Immediately, Cromwell left court and devised her ruin. In June 1536, he was to tell the Imperial ambassador, Eustache

Henry's first queen, Katherine of Aragon, failed to provide him with the son he so desperately desired

Chapuys, that "he had thought up and plotted the affair of the Concubine, in which he had taken a great deal of trouble", building his case on the King's obsessive fear of treason and the Queen's flirtatious nature. It has been called one of the most audacious plots in English history.

Anne enjoyed the admiration of the men in her circle. Her reputation in the country at large, and in Catholic Europe, was notorious. The state papers are littered with reports of slanders against her, and thus Cromwell had good reason

to believe that charges of immorality would stick because people would find them credible.

He apparently met no difficulty in gathering evidence. Women in her household were willing to testify against her. When Henry VIII was shown the first proofs, he was sceptical and instructed Cromwell to investigate further. Cromwell soon produced evidence of adultery and worse that Henry could not ignore.

Two indictments were drawn up against the Queen, charging her with

TO THE MANOR BORN? Anne Boleyn: The making of a queen

Anne was probably born in 1501, the younger daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn. In 1522, aged 21, possibly through her father's influence, she arrived at the English court as maid-of-honour to Katherine of Aragon, after spending seven years in France serving Claude, Francis I's queen, and Marguerite of Valois, his sister. That is when Henry VIII perhaps first met Anne, although he may have met her when he visited Margaret of Austria, Regent of the Netherlands, in 1513; Anne was then in her train.

Under the auspices of Margaret, and later of Marguerite of Valois, whom she served at some point during her time in France, Anne was exposed to the 'querelle des femmes', a lively debate about the role of women in society, which looked forward to a time when they would enjoy greater equality and autonomy. It was probably this cultural background, as well as the courtly sophistication she acquired, that gave Anne the confidence to forge her unique career in England and make her own choices in life. She may also have been influenced by Marguerite, a forward thinker, in her radical religious views.



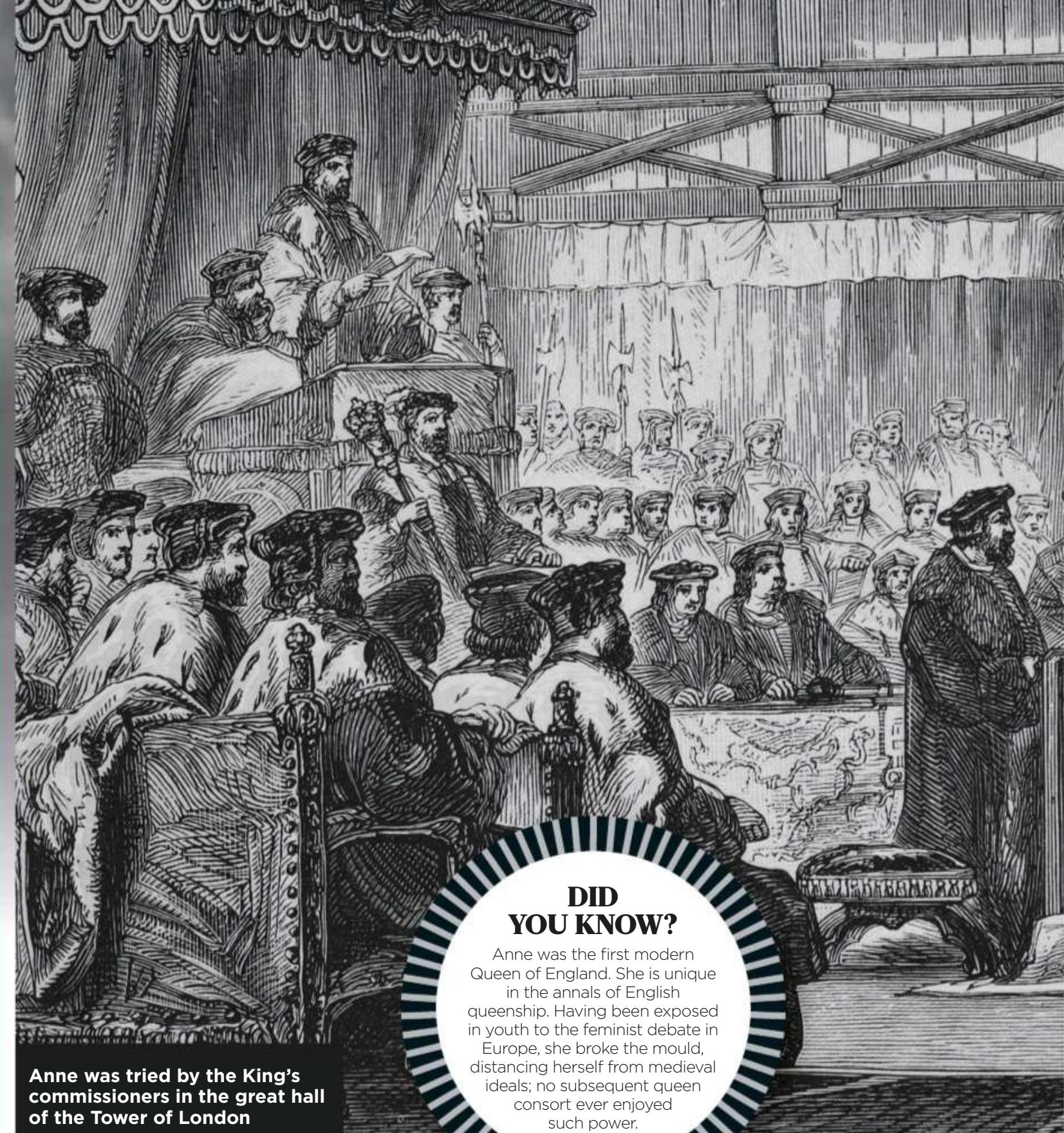
The enduring fascination with Anne Boleyn's life has led to a multiplicity of film and TV portrayals, like *The Tudors*

ENEMY NO 1

Thomas Cromwell

Chief among Anne's enemies was the King's principal secretary, Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell, the son of a blacksmith, had risen to become Henry's chief adviser. He was clever, resourceful and able, an administrative and financial genius, pragmatic, hard-headed and ruthless, all qualities that were useful to the King. A contemporary who knew him thought him one whom "all others did excel in extort[ing] power and insatiate tyranny". Another recognised Cromwell as "the King's ear and mind, to whom he entrusted the entire government of the kingdom".

Where he had once been Anne Boleyn's staunch supporter, they were now rivals. She probably saw his growing power as a threat to her own influence. She opposed his policy in regard to the dissolution of the monasteries. She was a Francophile, while his instincts leaned towards the Empire, where English merchants had lucrative markets. Cromwell was aware that Anne had boasted that "she would live to see his head cut off".



Anne was tried by the King's commissioners in the great hall of the Tower of London

DID YOU KNOW?

Anne was the first modern Queen of England. She is unique in the annals of English queenship. Having been exposed in youth to the feminist debate in Europe, she broke the mould, distancing herself from medieval ideals; no subsequent queen consort ever enjoyed such power.



Anne Boleyn had assisted Thomas Cromwell's rise, and he hers, helping to bring about the break with Rome. Their turbulent relationship is depicted in Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*

adultery with five men: three were eminent courtiers and intimates of the King, one was a relatively lowly musician, and the other was her own brother, George Boleyn, Lord Rochford. The evidence against Rochford had been laid by his wife. Anne was also accused of plotting the King's assassination. These crimes were high treason, punishable by death.

A KING'S MERCY

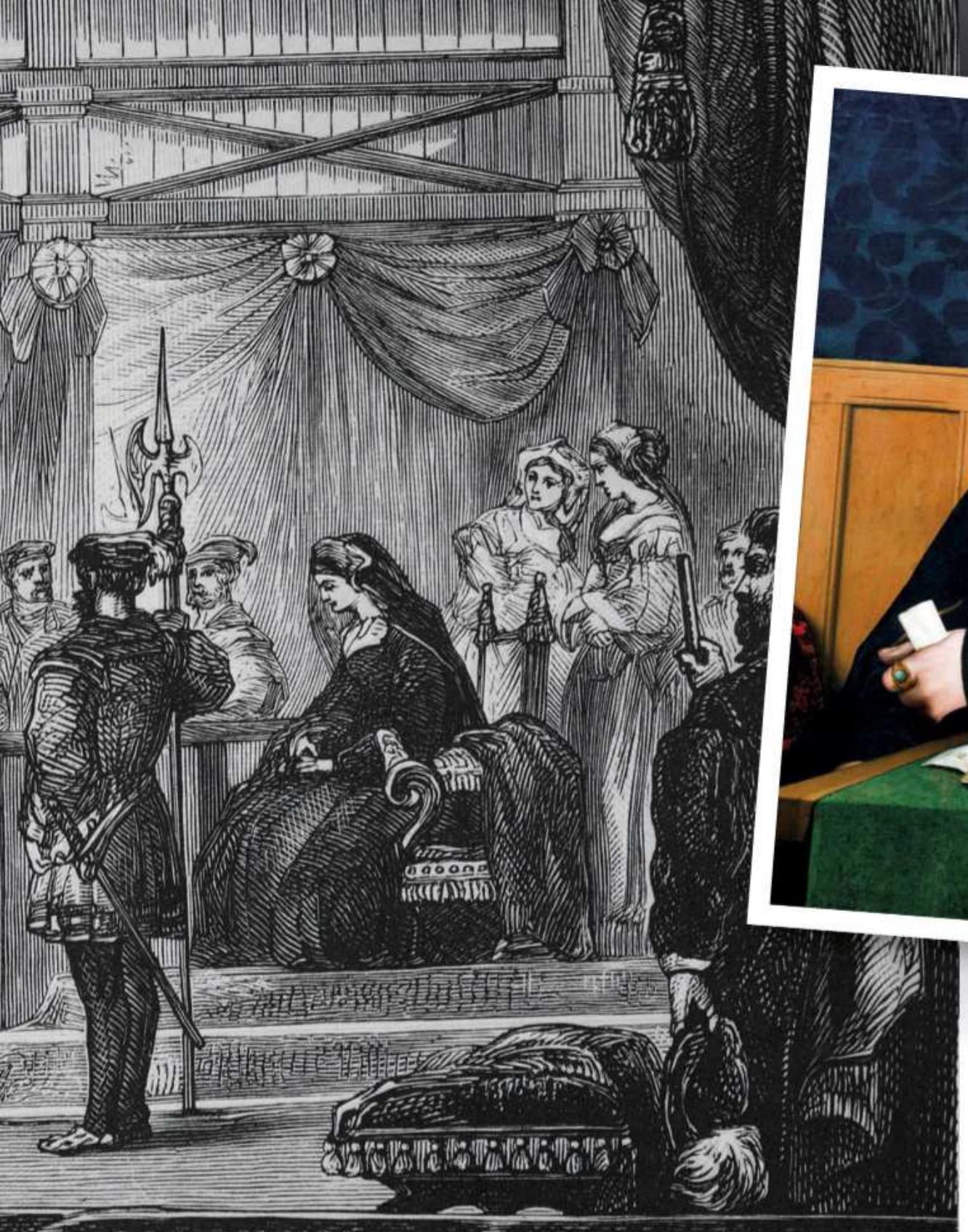
The guns on the Tower Wharf announced Anne's committal to the fortress. She was held in the Tower palace, a favoured royal residence for centuries. It had become outdated by the Tudor period, and Anne had only stayed there once, before her crowning. Cromwell, on Henry's orders, had spent the equivalent of £1.3 million on refurbishments, so that she might be accommodated in suitable splendour. The walls and ceilings were decorated in the "antick" Renaissance style,

and the luxurious apartments comprised a great chamber, a closet, a dining chamber embellished with a "mantel of wainscot with antick", and a bedchamber with a privy.

The Queen of England remained staunch in her protestations of innocence, as did the gentlemen accused with her; only the musician pleaded guilty. Another retracted his confession. But on 12 May, the four commoners were tried in Westminster Hall and condemned to death.

Three days later, at a show trial in the great hall of the Tower, attended by 3,000 people, Anne herself was tried by 27 peers, among them her own father. Despite her putting up a spirited defence, she was found guilty. Weeping, her uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, pronounced sentence:

"Because thou hast offended against our sovereign the King's Grace in committing treason against his person, the law of the realm is this, that thou



After falling out with Anne, Henry's loyal secretary, Thomas Cromwell, found a way to be rid of her forever



Anne's own uncle, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, read out her death sentence in court

“The King, claiming to be moved by pity, vouchsafed his wife the kinder death”

hast deserved death, and thy judgement is this: that thou shalt be burnt here within the Tower of London on the Green, else to have thy head smitten off, as the King's pleasure shall be further known.”

Anne maintained her composure. According to an account written in 1536, “Her face did not change, but she appealed to God whether the sentence was deserved; then, turning to the judges, she said she believed there was some other reason for which she was condemned than the cause alleged, of which her conscience acquitted her, as she had always been faithful to the King. But she did not say this to preserve her life, for she was quite prepared to die.” She was taken back to the Queen's

Lodgings, where she spent her final days. The condemnation of her brother, Lord Rochford, followed, and two days later, on 17 May, all five men were beheaded on Tower Hill. Chapuys wrote that Anne saw them executed from the Tower, “to aggravate her grief”. That same day, her marriage to Henry VIII was annulled, and her daughter Elizabeth was declared a bastard.

The King, claiming to be moved by pity, vouchsafed his wife the kinder death. Even before her trial, he had ordered that the executioner of Calais, an expert swordsman, be sent for, preempting the verdict given at her trial. The promise of a swifter death by the sword was probably used as a bargaining tool in securing her agreement to the

annulment of her marriage and the disinheriting of her daughter.

Anne's execution was set for 9am on 18 May, but it was twice postponed to ensure that a reasonable number of witnesses were present; throughout the whole legal process against the Queen, the government took pains to ensure that justice was seen to be done. But the delay was torture for her.

“Anne knelt in the straw, arranging her clothes about her feet to preserve her modesty”



SITE OF VIOLENCE

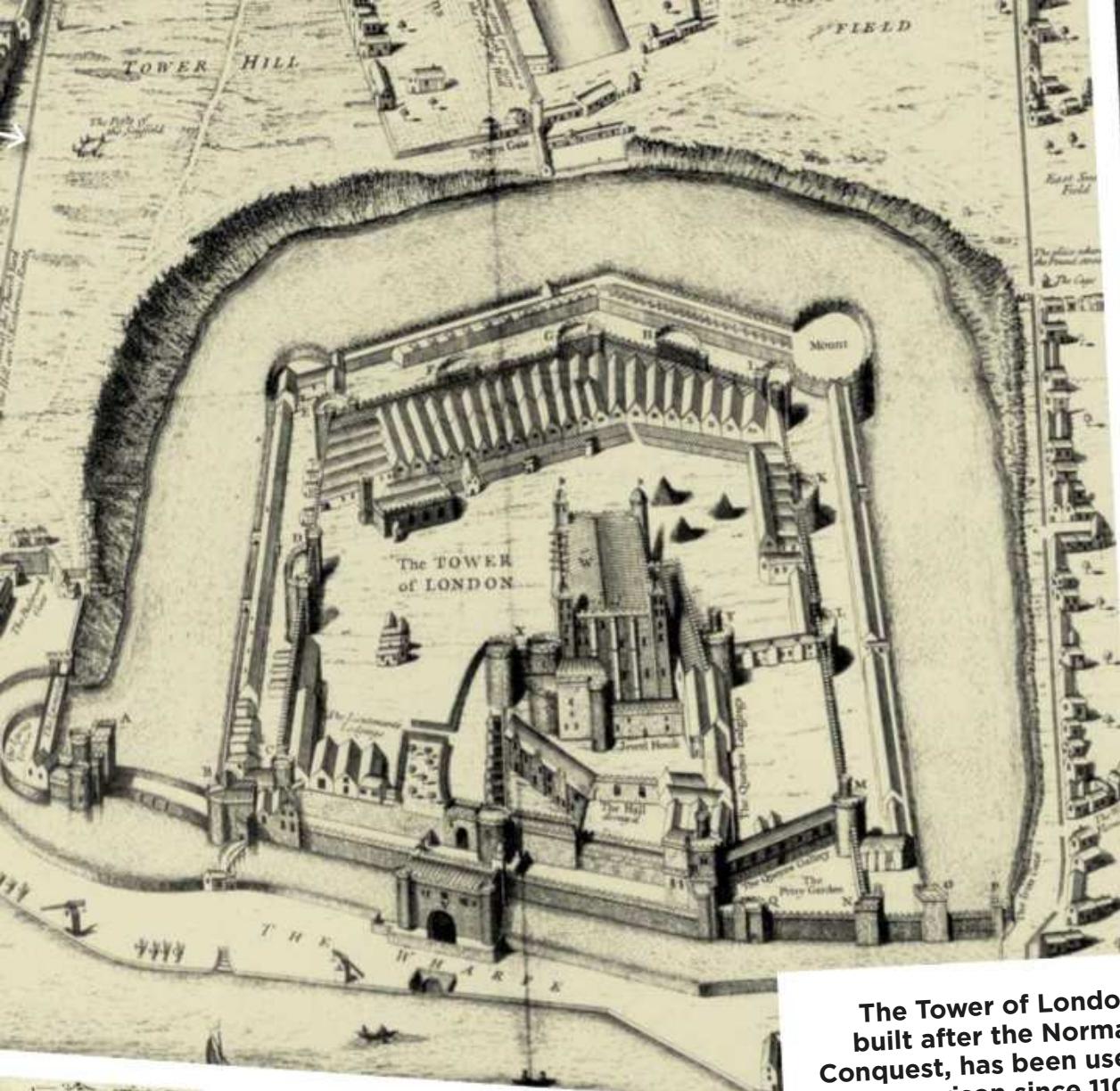
A permanent scaffold was erected on Tower Hill in 1485 for public executions. Though Cromwell and many other key figures were beheaded here, Anne was not among them: she was given a private execution within the Tower grounds.



DID YOU KNOW?

Modern medical opinion estimates that death by decapitation takes an average of thirteen seconds. Some victims die instantly, while others – including perhaps Anne Boleyn – can experience a few dreadful moments of awareness of what is happening.

Anne's ladies-in-waiting wept as she climbed the scaffold



Before her execution, Anne said: "I have heard say the executioner was very good, and I have a little neck"



“Master Kingston,” she said to the Constable, “I hear say I shall not die afore noon, and I am very sorry therefore, for I thought then to be dead and past my pain.” Kingston told her “it should be no pain, it was so subtle” and then she said, “I have heard say the executioner was very good, and I have a little neck.” And then she put her hands around it, laughing as she did so. Kingston observed to Cromwell, “I have seen many men and also women executed and all they have been in great sorrow, but to my knowledge, this lady has much joy and pleasure in death.”

That morning, thinking it would be her last, the Queen had taken the sacrament. Kingston reported to Cromwell, “She sent for me that I might be with her at such time as she received the good Lord, to the intent I should hear her speak as touching her

innocency always to be clear.” Chapuys reported: “She expressed the desire to be executed. No person ever showed greater willingness to die.”

One of the ladies in attendance on Anne had secretly sent to Chapuys to tell him that the Queen, “before and after receiving the Sacrament, affirmed to her, on the damnation of her soul, that she had never offended with her body against the King.” Anne’s protestations of innocence should surely be regarded as genuine. It is barely conceivable that, on the brink of death and divine judgement, she would have risked her immortal soul by lying.

COME TO DIE

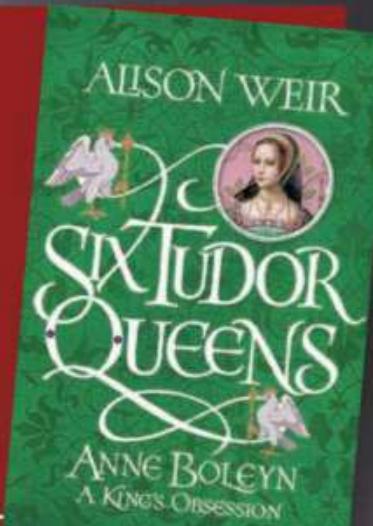
At 8am on the morning of 19 May 1536, attended by four young ladies, the Queen was escorted by Kingston to a newly built scaffold that stood before the house of ordnance, facing the White Tower – not on the supposed execution site on Tower Green that is shown to visitors today, but on the parade ground (then the tournament ground) before the Waterloo Barracks.

A thousand spectators awaited the Queen. She approached them seemingly untroubled, wearing a red kirtle, a low-necked gown of grey damask, a short white cape, and an English gable hood. She looked calm, even cheerful. Addressing the crowd, one contemporary source reported that she said “she was come to die, as she was judged by the law; she would accuse

5 MINUTES WITH Alison Weir



Alison is the author of the *Six Tudor Queens* novels, based on true events. She has also written several historical biographies.



Q What made you want to write about Anne?

A The fall of Henry VIII’s second wife, Anne Boleyn, is one of the most dramatic and debated episodes in English history. Until I published *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn*, in 2009, no one had devoted a whole history book to the subject. It was wonderful to have that broad scope in which to research Anne’s fall in unprecedented detail, and it was exciting to find new evidence emerging. More recently, it has been fascinating to revisit her again in my new novel, *Anne Boleyn: A King’s Obsession*, and to explore fresh theories based on new research.

Q Do you think Anne was guilty of the charges for which she was executed?

A I think there was a grievous miscarriage of justice. The circumstances of Anne’s fall strongly suggest that she was framed; even her enemy Chapuys thought so. In assessing the evidence for and against her guilt, the truth becomes staggeringly clear. There are a multitude of compelling factors, notably the incongruity of the charges (particularly that of plotting the King’s death), the alteration of dates and the discrepancies in the indictments.

Q Why does her story continue to fascinate to this day?

A Her life is one of the most debated in English history, and she has always been controversial. I think the fascination lies in the fact that Anne’s story is so dramatic. It’s an irresistible blend of romance, intrigue, horror and mystery – from the romance of Henry’s courtship of Anne to those 17 dreadful days she spent in the Tower, with their awful climax.

none, nor say anything of the ground upon which she was judged. She prayed heartily for the King, and said that he had been always to her a good, gentle sovereign lord: and if any would meddle with her cause, she required them to judge the best. And so she took her leave of them, and of the world, and heartily desired they would pray for her.”

Anne knelt in the straw, arranging her clothes about her feet to preserve her modesty, looking around nervously.

Pierre-Nolasque
Bergeret's 19th-century
painting of Anne Boleyn
condemned to death





AXE OR SWORD?

The English executioner was a hangman, with little experience of chopping off heads. It was probably in order to avoid a bungled decapitation that the executioner of Calais, an expert swordsman, had been sent for to despatch Anne in the continental manner. This was a much cleaner and kinder method of execution than death by the axe. The axe hewed; the sword sliced cleanly.

The executioner's assistant distracted Anne, leading her to turn her head to one side, while the swordsman crept up behind her

RIP?

Anne's skeleton

Anne was buried in the royal chapel of St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London, beneath the altar pavement.

In 1876, during excavations, what was thought to be her skeleton was found. It was described as the bones of "a female of between twenty-five and thirty years of age" with a square lower jaw and tiny vertebrae, which were thought to bear witness to Anne Boleyn's famous "little neck", and a surgeon confidently expressed the opinion that these remains were "all consistent with the published descriptions of Queen Anne Boleyn".

But forensic science was then in its infancy, and recent research strongly suggests that Anne was about 35 when she died, while her portraits all show her with a pointed chin; so this was probably not her skeleton. But a partial skeleton of another woman was also found, a woman of 30 to 40 years old. It probably belonged to Anne Boleyn. The remains were reburied, however, as those of Lady Rochford.

The chapel of St Peter ad Vincula is also the resting place of Catherine Howard and Lady Jane Grey



◀ The headsman said in French, "Madam, do not fear. I will wait till you tell me." One maid, weeping, came forward to blindfold her with a linen cloth. Those watching sank to their knees, in respect for the passing of a soul. Anne was fervently praying aloud, making no confession, but saying, "O Lord God, have pity on my soul! To Jesus Christ I commend my soul!"

Distracted on purpose by the executioner's assistant, Anne turned her blindfolded head towards the scaffold steps, and the headsman, having removed his shoes, came up stealthily behind her, grasping the sword with both hands, and swinging it to gain

the necessary momentum. One judge reported that, as the Queen of England's head fell to the ground, her lips and eyes were still moving.

Anne Boleyn left behind her an enduring mystery. Had she been guilty, or had she died an innocent woman? "If any will meddle with my cause," she had said on the scaffold, "I require them to judge the best." Many since have done just that, and a good case can be made for her innocence. But the enigmas remain, and it is hard to get beyond that brave and tragic figure on the scaffold to the woman who had been the scandal of Christendom and the catalyst for the English Reformation. ◎



Fixed gaze, hands on belt, legs wide; Edward was taught to mimic the poses Henry VIII used himself, as a way of displaying his virility and prowess

EDWARD VI

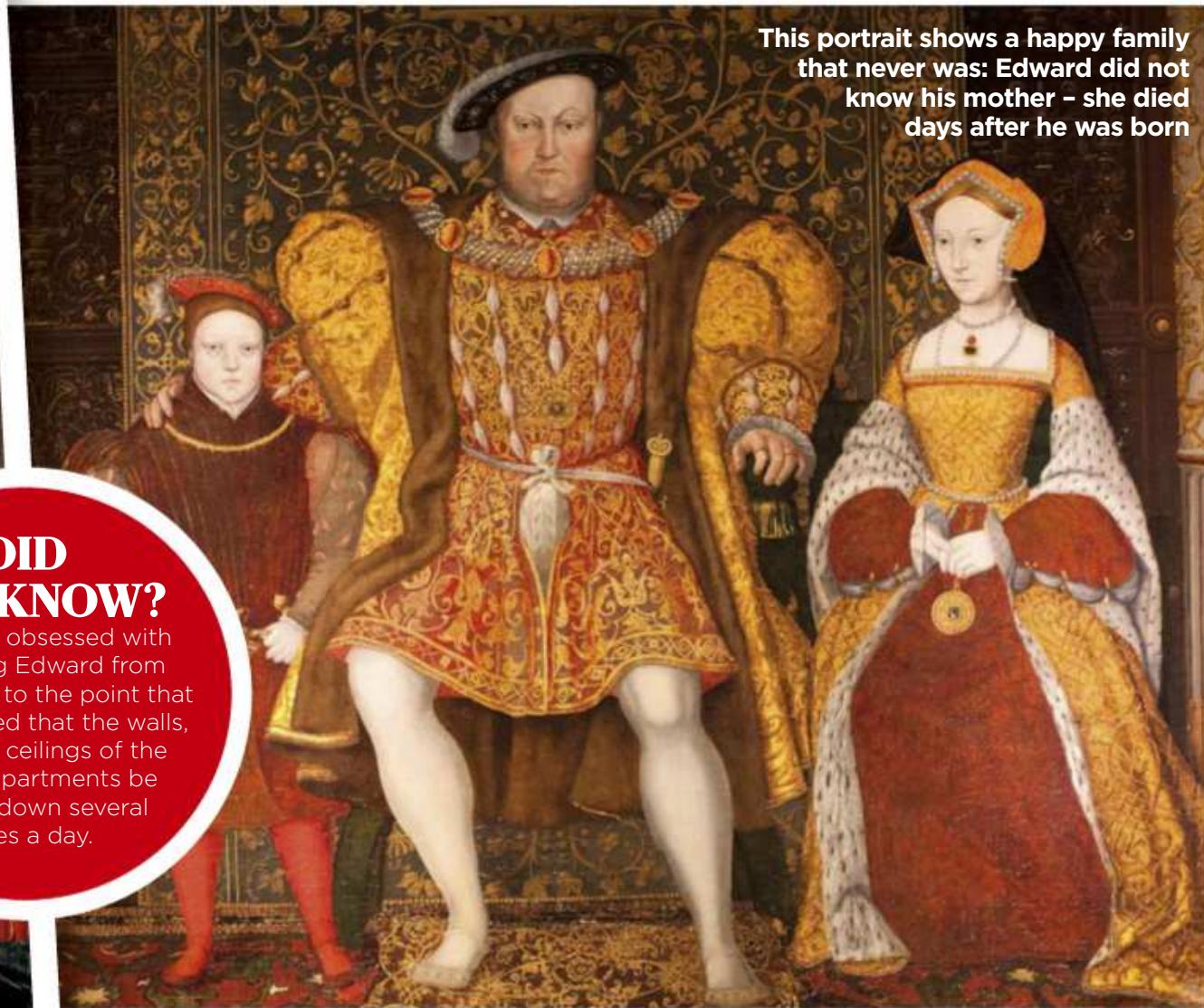
The Forgotten Tudor King

The son Henry VIII always wanted is maligned as a sickly child – a reputation he doesn't deserve. The real Edward, writes **Tracy Borman**, was a hearty lad who could have been as terrible as his father



DID YOU KNOW?

Henry was obsessed with preventing Edward from getting sick, to the point that he demanded that the walls, floors and ceilings of the Prince's apartments be washed down several times a day.



This portrait shows a happy family that never was: Edward did not know his mother – she died days after he was born

“Far from being dominated by ambitious councillors, Edward had all the makings of a tyrant”

At around 2am on 12 October 1537, Jane Seymour, the third wife of King Henry VIII, was delivered of a healthy son – “the most beautiful boy that ever was seen”. This was the defining moment of Henry’s reign: he had waited more than 20 long years for a healthy son and heir. Beset with joy, the King rode to Hampton Court to meet his “precious jewel”, the saviour of his dynasty. Meanwhile, the news was conveyed to all corners of the kingdom, sparking widespread celebrations. A lavish christening was held three days later in the chapel at Hampton Court Palace, and the child was christened Edward.

It is one of the great ironies in history that the boy upon whom Henry lavished so much care and attention, and in whom all his hopes were vested, would reign for just six and a half years. It would be the younger of Edward’s half-sisters, Elizabeth, largely disregarded by their father, who would rescue the fortunes of the Tudor dynasty and become its greatest monarch.

But if Edward’s reign was short, it was far from insignificant, heralding some of the most significant religious reforms that England has ever seen. Edward and his advisers, notably Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, would lay the foundations for the modern Church of England. Neither was Edward the

fragile boy that he has so often been portrayed as. He enjoyed robust health for most of his young life, and had a will of steel to match. Far from being dominated by ambitious councillors such as the Dukes of Somerset and Northumberland, he had strong opinions, ideas of his own and all the makings of a tyrant. In short, he was a chip off the old block.

THE PRECOCIOUS PRINCE

Edward spent most of his early years at Hampton Court and a series of other palaces outside London, where the air was cleaner and the risk of plague much lower. He was widely reported to be a happy, healthy child. His lady governess, Margaret Bryan, who had also cared for Mary and Elizabeth, wrote an enthusiastic report of the Prince’s progress to Thomas Cromwell in March 1539: “My lord Prince is in good health and merry. Would to God the King and your Lordship had seen him last night. The minstrels played, and his Grace danced and played so wantonly that he could not stand still.”

As was common practice for royal children, Edward was raised among women for the first few years of his life. But upon reaching his

sixth birthday, his life underwent a dramatic transformation. The Tudors considered this the age at which a child became an adult. As a result, Henry VIII ordered that his son’s apartments be remodelled so that they exactly mirrored his own, including Flemish tapestries showing the same classical and Biblical scenes that the King favoured. The Prince was also given a new wardrobe of clothes so that he could dress like his father.

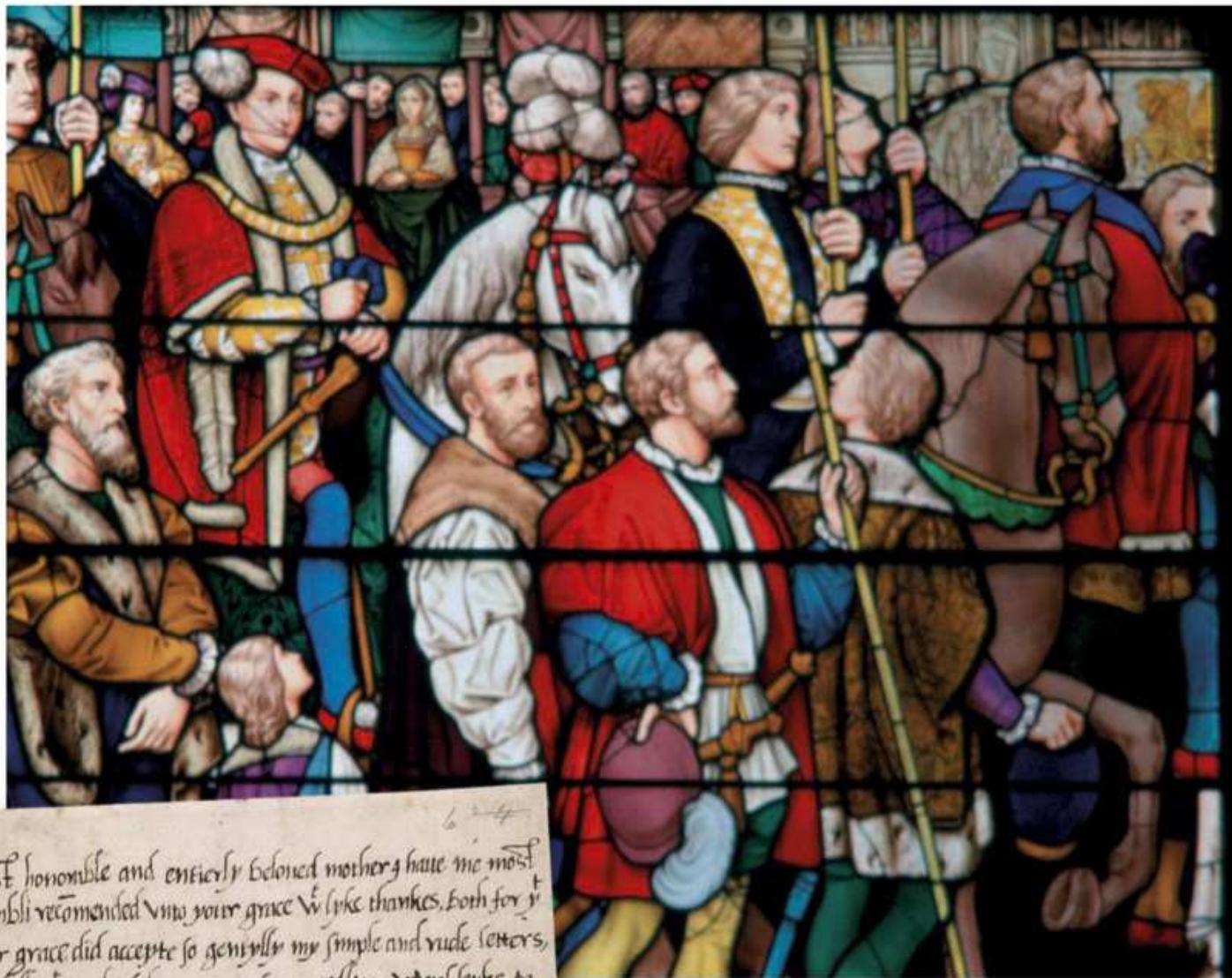
The other significant change in Edward’s upbringing was that his female attendants were dismissed, replaced by the care of a predominantly male household. The respected scholars Richard Cox and John Cheke were appointed as his tutors. The latter was greatly impressed with his new charge and claimed that he “has accomplished at this early period of his life more numerous and important objects, than others have been able to do when their age was more settled and matured”. This was no flattery. Edward was a precocious student who applied himself with a discipline beyond his years.

Henry took a close interest in his son’s education, and although he accepted that it should follow humanist lines, with an emphasis

Hale or frail?

Far from being the sickly child that history has often portrayed him as, Edward was a robust little boy and, as Thomas Cromwell put it, “sucketh like a child of his puissance”. Lord Chancellor Thomas Audley paid a visit to his nursery and noted that Edward “waxeth firm and stiff”. Having enjoyed a rich diet since he was weaned, the boy was well on the way to mirroring his father’s generous proportions.

In October 1541, one visitor to Edward’s household described the Prince as “well fed”, hastily adding that he was also handsome and remarkably tall for his age. A rather less tactful report claimed that the four-year-old was “so gross and unhealthy that he could not believe, judging from what he could see now, that he would live long”. Edward also contracted malaria, much to his father’s alarm, but recovered and was put on a strict diet. It did the trick: the Prince remained in good health for the next ten years.



Most honorable and entirely beloved mother, I have me most humbly recommended unto your grace wylke thankes both for your grace did accepte so gentilly my simple and rude letters, and also if it pleased your grace so gentilly to welsaue to directe unto me your louing and tender letters, which do geue me much comfort and encouragement to go forward in such thinges wherin your grace bereath me on hand, for I am alredy entred, & pray god & maie he habbe in part to satisfy my good expection of ynglynes mises to my father and of your grace, whom god haue ever in his most blessed keeping.

Your louing sonne
E. Prince.

ABOVE: Edward was crowned on 20 February 1547, three weeks after his father's death

LEFT: Cranmer wasn't his only correspondent; in this letter, Edward thanks his stepmother, Katherine Parr, for encouraging him in his studies

assured him: “I am not unmindful either of your attention to me or your kindness which you study every day to show me.”

The archbishop was so successful in cultivating the Tudor heir that Edward soon came to look upon him as a fatherly figure. His letters to Cranmer reveal how close they had become. “I affectionately receive and honour that truly paternal affection which you have expressed,” he told Cranmer on one occasion, “and I hope that you may live many years, and continue to be my honoured father by your godly and wholesome advice.” The archbishop called the Prince, “My dearest son in Christ,” and assured him, “My life is not to be called living unless you are in health and strength.”

MEN OF FAITH

Edward became king in January 1547, at the age of nine. By that time, he was fired with an evangelising zeal. “In the court there is no bishop, and no man of learning so ready to argue in support of the new doctrine as the King,” reported the Imperial ambassador.

on Latin, Greek, grammar and rhetoric, he insisted that Edward should also be taught fencing, horseback riding, music and other courtly pursuits. The King also ensured that Edward received a religious education that was at least broadly evangelical: after all, it was crucial that his heir should respect and promote the royal supremacy over the Church. Religious conservatives had no place in his schoolroom.

Edward soon grew close to Cranmer who, with an eye to the future, was determined to inspire in the young prince a passion for the reformed faith. In 1544, Edward wrote to thank Cranmer for his “very kind letter”, and

Cranmer came to a bad end after Edward's death – Mary had him burned alive



Edward as Prince of Wales; he would only be king for six years, five months and nine days

Edward spent several hours a day in private devotion and, determined that his subjects should conform to his faith, he spent much of his short reign implementing a series of radical reforms that would establish a strong Protestant doctrine in England.

In January 1549, the first *Book of Common Prayer* was published. Its aim was to establish uniformity of worship for all, and it was followed by an even more extreme version three years later. This, the second *Book of Common Prayer* provided a model for worship within the

Family ties

The young prince had lost his mother and suffered a typically absent father, but his youth was marked with care and affection



HENRY VIII

As might be expected for the long-awaited son that he had gone to so much trouble (and so many marriages) to beget, Henry lavished excessive care upon Edward from the moment of his birth. He ordered that "this whole realm's most precious jewel" should be raised primarily in newly built apartments at Hampton Court, well away from the perpetual sickness that plagued the capital. A strict regime of care, hygiene and security was put in place to protect the infant prince's health and welfare. No detail was overlooked. A rare glimpse of the Prince's bedchamber at Hampton

Court is provided by a reference to the making of "a frame of scaffold polls over the Prince's bed to keep away the heat of the Sun".

All of the King's assiduous care was administered at a distance: Henry adhered to royal tradition by being as absent a father to Edward as he was to Mary and Elizabeth. A rare glimpse of him paying a visit to his infant son was recorded in May 1538, when he spent the day with Edward "dallying with him in his arms a long space and so holding him in a window to the sight and great comfort of all the people".



KATHARINE PARR

KATHERINE PARR

Edward never knew his mother: Jane Seymour died just 12 days after his birth. Of the three stepmothers who followed, he was closest to Katherine Parr. Henry's sixth and final wife was a loving and caring figure to all her stepchildren. Keen to present a united Tudor family to the court, she employed a number of personal touches. For example, for the New Year celebrations of 1544/5, she had matching clothes made for herself, the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth, and Prince Edward, all in cloth of silver.

Recognising Edward's intellectual abilities, Katherine took a keen interest in his schooling – and that of his half-sister Elizabeth – and may have influenced the appointment of their tutors. The young prince, who shared Elizabeth's love of learning, gratefully enthused to his "most dear mother": "I received so many benefits from you that my mind can hardly grasp them."



MARY AND ELIZABETH

Edward's elder half-sister Mary was a regular visitor to his nursery. Aged 21 at the time of his birth, she had a strong maternal instinct and lavished affection on her motherless baby brother. She also gave him various gifts – all of which were more personal than those he received from his father. On New Year in 1539, for example, she presented him with a made-to-measure coat of crimson satin embroidered with gold and pearls and with sleeves of tinsel. Throughout his childhood, and before their relationship was soured by diverging religious views, Edward was very fond of his elder sister. He "took special content" in her company and once assured her that, despite his infrequent letters, "I love you most."

Edward was also fond of his other half-sister Elizabeth, to whom he was much closer in age – she was just four years his senior – and with whom he was educated. Their lessons were heavily influenced by the curriculum known as *bonae litterae* (good letters), espoused by northern European humanists. It emphasised the importance of Latin and Greek grammar and rhetoric, classical authors and scripture above more traditional elements of a prince's education, such as hunting, hawking and dancing. Edward also shared his sister Elizabeth's fascination with magic and astrology; among his toys was a red box filled with "small tools of sorcery". Above all, though, the siblings grew to share a passionate commitment to the reformist faith.





LEFT: Edward is in the centre of this allegory of the Reformation, which shows the Pope being crushed and Henry VIII watching on

BELOW: Lord Protector Edward Seymour was also the King's uncle



DID YOU KNOW?

Young though he was, Edward attracted several potential brides, including Mary, Queen of Scots, and Lady Jane Grey. None of the proposed marriages came to anything.

Church of England for the next four centuries. At the same time, Edward's council banned a number of old Catholic rituals, such as the use of rosaries, the casting of holy water and the undertaking of pilgrimage.

This had a profound impact upon the lives of Edward's subjects – including those closest to the King. An entry in Edward's journal for January 1552 records: "The Emperor's ambassador moved me severally that my sister Mary might have mass, which, with no little reasoning with him, was denied him." If he had lived to maturity, there is little doubt that Edward would have persecuted any non-conformists with increasing severity – even more so, perhaps, than his elder half-sister later did.

Though young, Edward had a maturity beyond his years. The Italian physician and astrologer Hieronymus Cardano described how Edward "carried himself like an old man; and yet he was always affable and gentle, as became his age". He also wrote that Edward was "of stature somewhat below the middle height, pale-faced with grey eyes, a grave aspect, decorous and handsome". But for all his accomplishments, the inescapable fact was that Edward remained a minor.

While he was able to put his stamp on religious policies, thanks to his close relationship with Cranmer, his political authority was limited by the men his father

had appointed to form a regency council. Foremost among them was the young monarch's uncle, Edward Seymour, the Duke of Somerset.

Since his nephew's birth, Seymour had lusted for power and he was quick to seize the advantage when Henry VIII breathed his last. His close kinship to Edward made him the natural choice to take charge of the regency council as Lord Protector and Governor of the King's Person.

Although Seymour's position seemed assured until his nephew reached maturity,

marry Elizabeth and make himself Lord Protector. His arrogance soon made an enemy of his erstwhile ally John Dudley, another member of Edward's council. In October 1549, Dudley led a coup to oust his rival from office, and Edward was persuaded to order his uncle's arrest.

Although Seymour was subsequently released and readmitted to the Privy Council, he was deprived of any real power from that day forward. Dudley was now the dominant force behind Edward's reign – but he soon became as blinded by ambition as his predecessor.

Having secured himself the dukedom of Northumberland in October 1551, Dudley had Seymour arrested a few days later on trumped up charges of treason. The former Lord Protector was executed in January 1552. This served to increase the ranks of Dudley's enemies, but he ruled undeterred, with ever greater tyranny.

ONE LAST SCHEME

As his reign descended into chaos and disorder, Edward's health began to fail. In April 1552, he contracted measles. Although he recovered, his immune system was fatally weakened, and he soon fell prey to what was almost certainly tuberculosis. Royal doctors reported his symptoms with a mixture of alarm and confusion: "The matter he ejects from his mouth is sometimes coloured a greenish-yellow and black, sometimes pink, like the

"Seymour was quick to seize the advantage when Henry VIII breathed his last"

it would soon become obvious that vesting so much power in one man was ill advised. The fatal flaw in the arrangement was that, although the council had decreed that the Lord Protector "shall not do any act but with the advice and consent of the rest of the co-executors" of Henry VIII's will, Seymour was determined to exercise the full power of a regent. As one contemporary observed, he sought to make himself "the King of the King".

Seymour was ruthless in his quest for absolute authority, not flinching even to have his own brother, Thomas, put to death in March 1549 on charges of plotting to kidnap Edward,

Lady Jane Grey, who 'ruled' for nine days, found herself swiftly abandoned by those who connived to place her on the throne



DID YOU KNOW?

Early in his reign, Edward achieved a major victory against the Scots at the Battle of Pinkie Cleugh – but the 'Rough Wooing' of Scotland proved cripplingly expensive and resulted in ignominious failure.

Edward's private diary

Edward was raised in an environment that was as cosseted as it was sumptuous.

His household was a palace in miniature, with every conceivable luxury. He was regularly spoilt with gifts and allowed to indulge in a diet of rich foods. A troupe of minstrels was appointed to entertain the Prince by his indulgent father, who was determined that he should have everything that his young heart might desire. Lessons were made more palatable by school books with covers of enamelled gold set with rubies, sapphires and diamonds. His cutlery was studded with precious stones and his napkins sparkled with gold and silver thread.

The result of all this was that the Prince grew up to be rather spoilt and, if crossed, his temper could be vicious. A contemporary claimed that in a fit of rage, Edward once tore a living falcon into four pieces in front of his tutors.

When he became king, Edward started to keep a diary. A rather staid account of the key events of his reign, it also portrays him as cold, unfeeling and uncompromising – a dangerous blend of traits that might have hardened into tyranny if he had lived. Although he had been close to his uncle and Lord Protector, the Duke of Somerset, Edward afforded his demise no more than the following cursory mention in his journal: "The Duke of Somerset had his head cut off upon Tower Hill between eight and nine o'clock in the morning."

Seymour lost his head to Dudley's plotting, but with Edward's approval

colour of blood." Exhausted by a hacking cough and a high fever, Edward also developed ulcers across his swollen body.

Despite his rapidly deteriorating condition, the King's mind remained sharp. He was determined to prevent the accession of his elder half-sister Mary, aware that she would undo all of the religious reforms for which he and Cranmer had worked so hard. But he also proposed to disinherit his other half-sister, Elizabeth, on account of her bastardy.

This ran contrary to the laws of inheritance, not to mention his late father's wishes. But Edward was under pressure from Dudley, who had his own family's interests at heart. In late May 1553, the dying King signed a 'Devise' for the succession, leaving his crown to Jane Grey, granddaughter of Henry VIII's sister Mary – and also Dudley's daughter-in-law.

By July, Edward was unable to keep any food down and was wracked by constant pain. Little wonder that he whispered to one of his attendants: "I am glad to die." On the 6th of that month, between 8pm and 9pm, the 15-year-old prepared for the end. To his last breath, he tried to safeguard the Protestant religion: "O Lord

God, save thy chosen people of England! O my Lord God, defend this realm from papistry and maintain thy true religion." He then whispered, "I am faint," to one of his servants, who cradled his body in his arms, "Lord have mercy on me, and take my spirit." They were the last words that Edward spoke.

Edward's wishes for the succession were carried out, but only briefly: Jane Grey was queen for just nine days. The dispossessed Mary rallied thousands of subjects to her cause, and soon her late brother's council turned its coat and declared for her. On 19 July, Mary was proclaimed queen amidst great rejoicing. She wasted no time in overturning all of Edward's reforms, but her victory too would be short-lived. She died after just five years on the throne, leaving their younger half-sister, Elizabeth, to continue the work that he had begun. ☠

GET HOOKED

READ

Tracy Borman is the author of a number of books on the Tudor period, including *The Private Lives of the Tudors*.







WAS MARY REALLY SO BLOODY?

The Tudor monarchs ordered thousands of executions. But has the so-called 'Bloody' Mary been unfairly singled out? **Tracy Borman** puts the Tudors on trial



BLOOD ON HER HANDS
Hundreds died due to Mary's obsession with returning England to the Roman Catholic faith

37

The age at which Mary became queen, making her the oldest Tudor monarch to take the throne



NEXT IN LINE

Following **Edward's** **early death**, and the brief coup that led to **Lady Jane Grey** being installed as queen, Mary rallied her supporters and **claimed the throne**.

Mary I is not the best known of the Tudors. Her brief reign, and that of her brother Edward, tend to be overshadowed by the looming presence of her father, Henry VIII, and his more famous daughter, Elizabeth I. If Mary is referred to at all, then it is as 'Bloody'. It is certainly true that her obsession with returning England to the Roman Catholic faith led her to send hundreds of Protestants to the flames. But was she really as bloody as her nickname suggests, especially when compared to the other Tudors? Was there more to her than the serious and intensely pious woman who has attracted little attention or sympathy? Scratching beneath the surface of this stereotypical version reveals a very different queen – and woman – to the traditional pantomime villain of history.

At 4am on 18 February 1516, Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's first wife, was delivered of a daughter, Mary. The

child might not have been the son that the King so craved, but she was at least healthy – and given Catherine's experience of childbirth, that was something to be thankful for.

If Henry had known that Mary would be the only child to survive from his first marriage, he might have dispatched with Catherine sooner. As it was, although he delighted in his newborn daughter, his thoughts were firmly focused upon begetting a son, and quickly. One child was not enough to show for seven years of marriage, and Henry needed a son to pass his crown to.

Although her sex had been a disappointment, Mary was raised with all of the care and luxury expected for a royal princess. She learned the typical courtly skills of music, dancing and riding, and was tutored by the celebrated humanist, Juan Luis Vives. Mary, then Henry's cherished only child, grew into an attractive and accomplished young girl and Henry proudly showed her off to visiting ambassadors, who all

praised her virtues. Gasparo Spinelli, the Venetian Secretary in London, described her long red hair "as beautiful as ever seen on a human head", with a "well proportioned" figure and "pretty face... with a very beautiful complexion". He also told of how the young princess "much beloved of her father" had danced with the French ambassador, "who considered her very handsome,

"Mary's world fell apart when her father annulled his marriage to her mother"

and admirable by reason of her great and uncommon mental endowments".

As the daughter of the King of England, Mary was a great prize in the international marriage market, and from an early age was courted by a number of impressive foreign suitors. But at the age of 17, her world fell apart when her father had



TUDOR DYNASTY

Henry VIII was King of England from 21 April 1509 until his death in 1547. Left of Henry is Edward, to his right is Jane Seymour, his third wife. Far left is Mary and far right is her half-sister Elizabeth

his marriage to her mother annulled so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. At a stroke, Mary was reduced from a princess to a mere 'lady' and was removed from the order of succession. In vain, she railed against the woman whom she and her ally, the Imperial ambassador Eustace Chapuys, called "the concubine". But Anne failed where Mary's mother had: she gave Henry only a daughter, Elizabeth.

KIND AND MATERNAL

Mary was both a kind and maternal young woman and, after Anne's fall, she took pity on her half-sister. As well as urging her father not to forget his younger daughter, she also bestowed thoughtful little gifts on the young girl, aware that the regular supply of luxurious clothes and other adornments from her mother, Anne Boleyn, had ceased abruptly. In 1538, for example, she gave Elizabeth a box embroidered with silver thread. The following year, she employed William Igrave, her father's embroiderer, to make her six-year-old sister "a coat of crimson satin, embroidered with gold".

Anne Boleyn's execution initially seemed to transform Mary's fortunes. She was summoned to court by her father, who, according to Chapuys, "made much of her" and gave her "many



THE NEW RELIGION

German reformer Martin Luther's radical ideas took hold in the 16th century, becoming known as Protestantism

CATHOLIC OR PROTESTANT?

Henry's actions had deadly consequences when Mary took the throne

The 16th century witnessed unprecedented upheaval in the religious beliefs and practices both in England and across Europe. Henry VIII's desire for an annulment from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, sparked religious turmoil in his kingdom because in order to secure it he had to reject papal authority and make himself head of a new Church of England. But by the time of Henry's death, England was still a Catholic country. Only during the reign of his son, Edward, and later his younger daughter Elizabeth, did the kingdom fully adopt the new Protestant ideas that were sweeping across Europe. Mary's short reign was sandwiched in between the two, and she temporarily restored England to the Roman Catholic fold. But the burning of the Protestant 'heretics' evoked widespread revulsion and paved the way to a more tolerant religious future for the kingdom.

The Reformation in Europe had really got underway with the publication of the German reformer Martin Luther's *95 Theses* in 1517. These criticised many of the practices of the Roman Catholic church, notably the sale of indulgences, which reduced the time spent in purgatory. Luther's radical ideas soon took hold and became known as Protestantism. They were developed further by the likes of John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli, who sought the true teachings of God from the gospel, rather than through the intercession of priests. One of the most divisive issues surrounded the Eucharist. The Catholics argued that the bread and wine were transformed into Christ's body and blood during the ceremony, whereas the Protestants affirmed that it was more symbolic. As the century progressed, each religious camp developed more radical sects, which intensified the hostility between them.

A CHURCH DIVIDED

Luther's *95 Theses* attacked the Catholic church's corrupt practice of selling 'indulgences' to absolve sin, sparking the Protestant Reformation, which split the church in two.

“jewels belonging to the unjust Queen”. But if Mary thought that she would now be automatically restored to her place in the succession and given back the title of princess, she was mistaken. Henry had no intention of revoking the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon after all the religious and political upheaval that it had caused. He persisted in trying to force Mary to accept her illegitimate status.

At first, Mary refused to give in, determined to honour her mother’s memory. Even Henry’s most skilled minister, Thomas Cromwell, failed to persuade her, and in exasperation declared: “To be plain with you, I think you the most obstinate woman that ever was.” The Dukes of Norfolk and Sussex were sent to demand Mary’s submission, and when she continued to resist, they brutally told her that “If she was their daughter, they would beat her and knock her head so violently against the wall that they would make it as soft as baked apples.”

Resolute and principled though she was, Mary was not entirely devoid of political awareness and, submitting to the persuasions of Chapuys, who urged her to push home her advantage and be restored to the King’s favour, she reluctantly agreed to acknowledge that her parents’ marriage had been invalid and her father was the Supreme Head of the Church. She was said to be deeply

aggrieved ever after at what she saw as a betrayal of her beloved late mother.

When Henry VIII’s third wife, Jane Seymour, gave birth to a healthy son, Edward, in 1537, Mary’s chances of inheriting the throne seemed distant once more.

Again, though, her strong maternal instinct won out over any resentment that she might have felt against this new sibling. She showed her little brother every kindness and sent him a succession of gifts. Even when Edward became king and began to put into practice his Protestant beliefs, which were anathema to Mary, she continued to show him every courtesy and respect.



COINING IT
Commemorative shilling for the 1554 marriage of Philip of Spain and Mary I of England

But Edward would reign for just six years, before succumbing to tuberculosis in July 1553. After a brief coup that led to Lady Jane Grey being installed as queen, Mary rallied her considerable body of supporters and claimed the throne, prompting a wave of popular rejoicing. There were street parties across the capital and lively celebrations throughout the realm. Although it was seen as undesirable, to say the least, to have a female ruler – the first in more than 400 years – as the eldest surviving child of Henry VIII, Mary was the only true heir in the eyes of her subjects.

DETERMINED TO WED

The popular rejoicing proved shortlived, however. Mary soon expressed her determination to marry Philip of Spain, and the wedding took place in July 1554. The anti-Spanish feeling that followed was overwhelming and, in terms of Mary’s authority as queen, disastrous. Already, there had been a rebellion against it, led by Thomas Wyatt. Mary’s own sister, Elizabeth, was suspected of involvement and only narrowly escaped with her life after a spell in the Tower.

“Although a female ruler was seen as undesirable, Mary was the true heir”



TRAITOR AT THE GATE?

Mary suspected her half-sister of **plotting against her**, but lack of evidence meant that **Elizabeth was released** from the Tower into house arrest in the country.



TUDOR TYRANT

MAIN: Henry had people executed not because they threatened the monarchy, but simply because they failed to do what he wanted
BELOW: Victims included Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, his second wife



Tudors on trial

HENRY VIII

'Bloody' sits better with Henry's name when you consider the thousands slaughtered at his command

Mary may have the reputation as the bloodiest of the Tudors, but it was her father, Henry VIII, who sent more men and women to their deaths than any other member of the dynasty. Thanks to the contemporary records being patchy and inconsistent, it is impossible to quantify exactly how many people were put to death at his orders. Estimates vary wildly from a few thousand to as many as 72,000.

Henry's break with Rome and marriage to Anne Boleyn sparked the first big wave of executions. His chief minister Thomas Cromwell devised the Oath of Supremacy, which affirmed the validity of his second marriage, as well as his position as Head of the Church of England. Many hundreds refused to take it, including – most famously – Thomas More, former Lord Chancellor and close friend of the King.

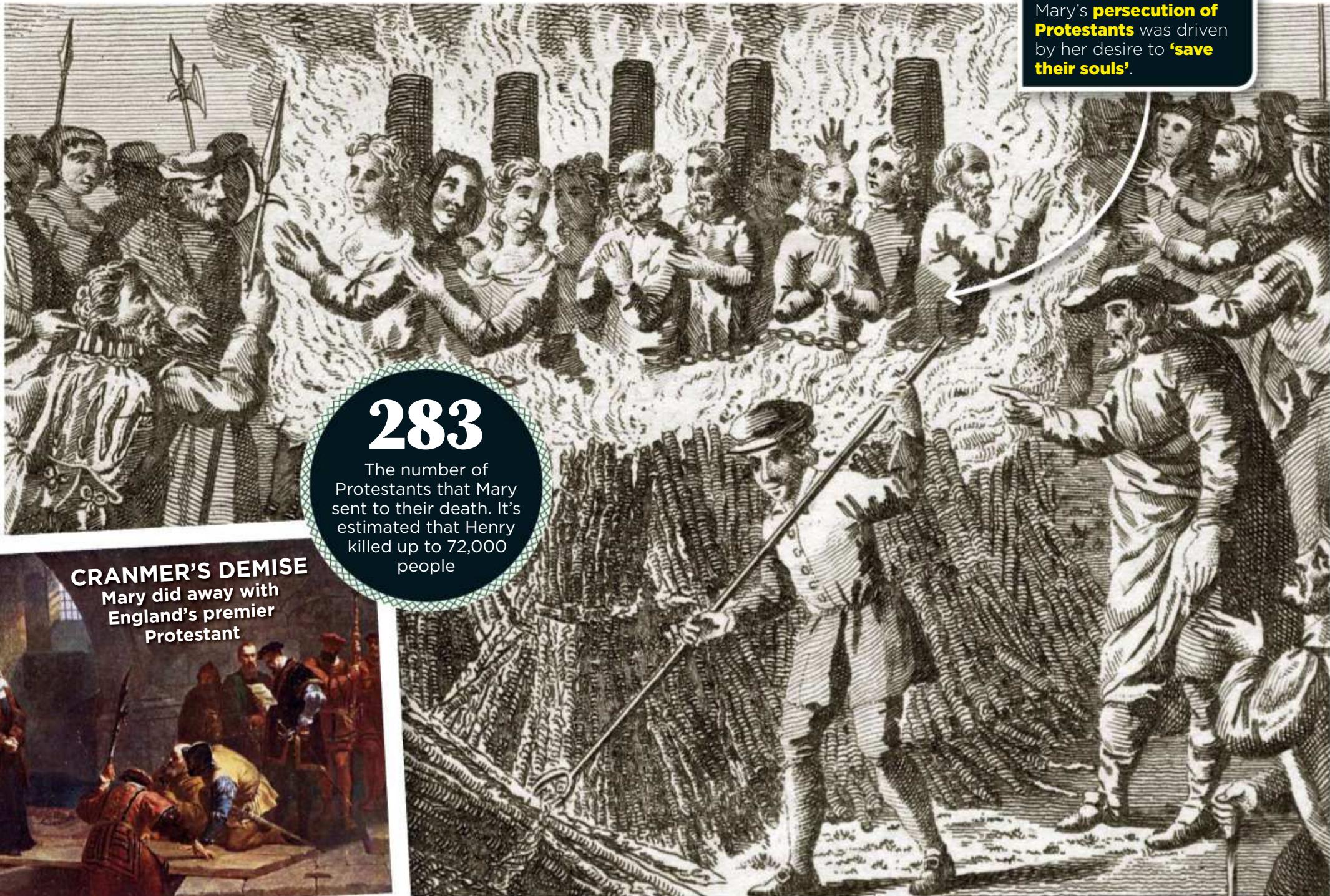
As Henry grew ever more paranoid and tyrannical during the last ten years of his reign, the Tower of London was crowded with the terrified subjects who had been imprisoned at his orders. He did not flinch from sending even those closest to him to the block – including two of his wives.

What makes Henry VIII the most 'bloody' of the Tudors is not just the number of his victims, but his motivation in putting them to death. Whereas his father, Henry VII, and his children, Mary, Edward and Elizabeth, confined their personal vengeance to those who had either raised or supported a rebellion, or threatened the stability of the realm in some other way, Henry had a staggering number of people executed for little more than their failure to bend to his personal will. Thus, for example, Thomas Cromwell went to the block on trumped up charges of treason, none of which would have been proved if Henry had bothered with a trial; and the real reason that Anne Boleyn was executed was her failure to give Henry a living male child, rather than her supposed adultery.



CHOPPING BLOCK

When former Lord Chancellor **Thomas More** refused to take an oath affirming Henry's position as Head of the Church, **the King** ordered his beheading.



◀ Mary's growing unpopularity had another cause. A devout Roman Catholic, she had abhorred her father's Reformation and the Protestant reforms of her brother Edward and, as soon as she became queen, she declared it her most urgent priority to restore England to the papal fold. Her first parliament overturned her brother Edward's religious reforms, and her husband persuaded a later parliament to abolish Henry VIII's religious laws too. A reconciliation with the papacy soon followed. Driven on by an evangelising zeal, Mary ordered increasingly drastic measures in order to bring any dissenters to heel, not flinching from burning those subjects who persisted in their 'heretical' beliefs.

The executions began in February 1555 and continued until the end of Mary's brief and bloody reign, resulting in the deaths of 283 Protestants – including the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. The victims of her persecutions were lauded as martyrs. Their fate sealed Mary's reputation as the bloodiest monarch in history.

But while there is no doubting the severity of her treatment of those whom she regarded as heretics, Mary acted out of conscience, not brutality. Blinded by her own faith, she genuinely believed that she was saving her subjects from

HELL FIRE

Ten Protestants at Lewes, Sussex, burn at the stake

“Mary's reputation as the bloodiest monarch in history was sealed”

eternal damnation by bringing them into the Roman Catholic fold.

The Protestant burnings go a long way towards explaining the reputation that Mary has suffered ever since, but there are other causes. Mary's physical appearance contributed to the view that she was a

ETERNAL DAMNATION

Mary's **persecution of Protestants** was driven by her desire to 'save their souls'.

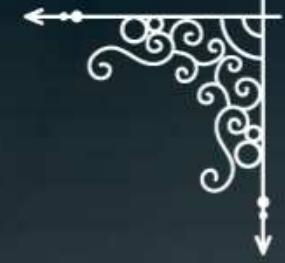
serious and cruel woman. As she entered London for the first time as queen, the crowds who had gathered to welcome her noticed that she appeared distant and aloof. In fact, Mary was far from aloof, but was naturally introspective and awkward in company. She lacked her father's charisma and charm, and that of her half-sister Elizabeth.

IF LOOKS COULD KILL

A small, thin woman, the turmoil and ill health that Mary had suffered for much of her adult life had aged her prematurely. Her appearance was not helped by the fact that she had lost nearly all of her teeth in her 20s. Among her most noticeable features were her eyes, which Mario Savorgnano, the Venetian ambassador, described as so piercing that they "inspire, not only respect, but fear, in those on whom she fixes them". In fact, Mary's tendency to stare intently at people was due more to her severe short-sightedness than an intention to intimidate. She also possessed a gruff, manly voice, which Savorgnano reported was "rough and

Tudors on trial

ELIZABETH I



Her long reign was punctuated by conspiracies and assassination fears. Elizabeth, however, was up to the job

Elizabeth I may have a reputation as a tolerant and moderate queen, but she did not flinch from putting rebellious subjects to death. Fears for her security mounted after Pope Pius V issued a bull of excommunication against her in 1570. This encouraged her Catholic subjects to rise against her and led to numerous plots and conspiracies. Many of these aimed to place the captive Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne. In the end, Elizabeth was persuaded to put her rival to death, but this did little to quell the Catholic threat, and Elizabeth continued to be plagued by the fear of assassination.

Like her father, Elizabeth grew bloodier during the later years of her reign, when the rise of an extreme branch of Catholicism, known as Jesuitism, inspired a rash of new conspiracies. Thanks to Elizabeth's excellent spy network, most of the plotters were arrested and thrown into the Tower. They included Edmund Campion, who before being executed at Tyburn on 1 December 1581, gave a defiant warning to Protestant England: "Touching our Society, be it known unto you that we have made a league... cheerfully to carry the cross that you shall lay upon us and never to despair your recovery while we have a man left to enjoy your Tyburn, or to be racked with your torments, or to be consumed with your prisons."

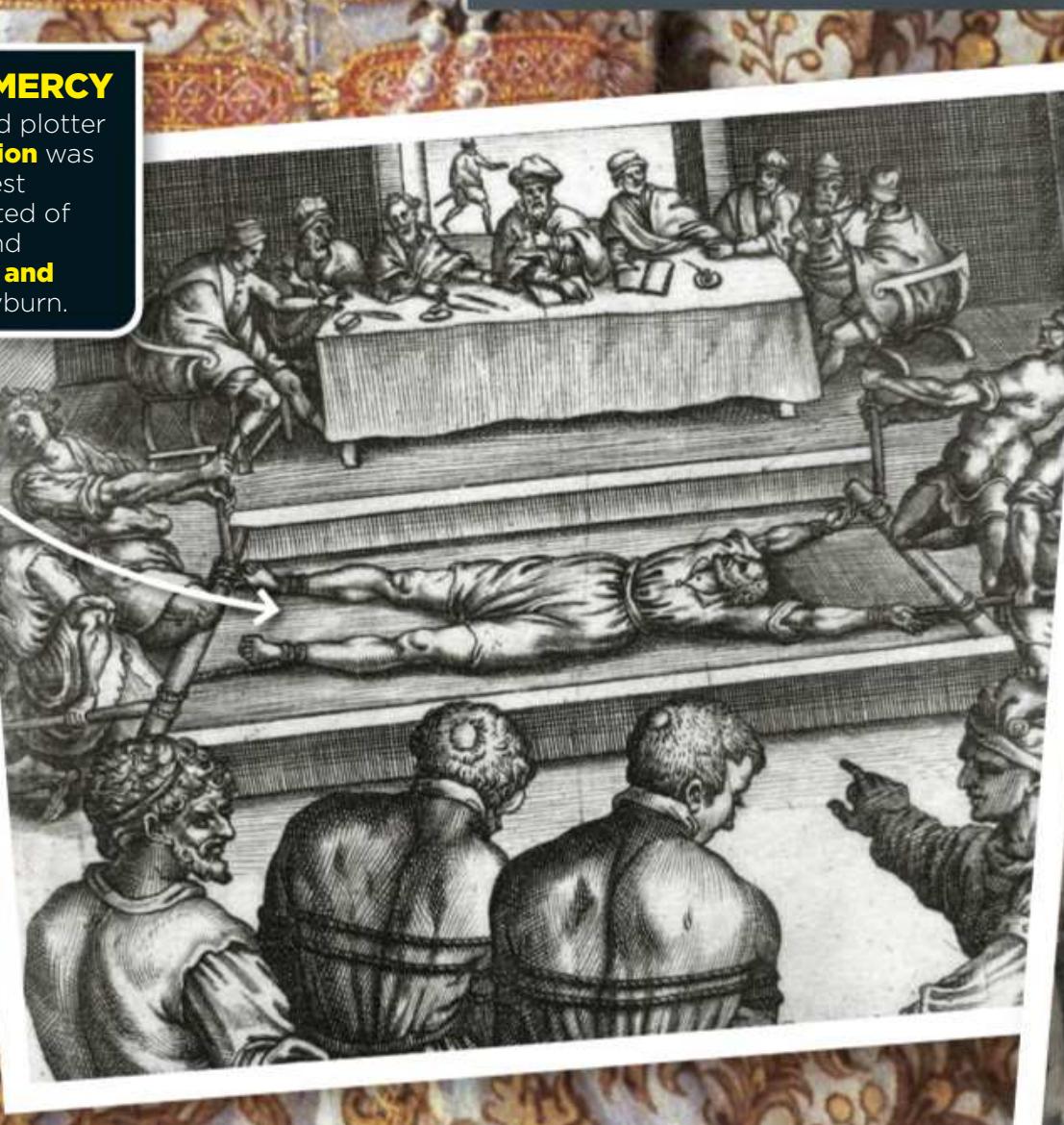
Campion was one of about 130 priests executed for religious treason in Elizabeth's reign. A further 60 of their lay supporters were also put to death. If Elizabeth was less bloody than her sister and father, however, it is interesting to note that she employed torture more than in any other English reign. She might have been a "weak and feeble woman", but she evidently had the "heart and stomach" that were needed to defend her throne.

BATTLE FOR THE CROWN

MAIN: Elizabeth I, who was queen from 1558 to 1603, was the last Tudor monarch. BELOW: Mary Stuart, briefly Queen of Scotland, was executed at Fotheringay Castle in 1587 on Elizabeth's orders. Her Roman Catholic beliefs were seen as a threat to the crown

SHOW NO MERCY

Jesuit priest and plotter **Edmund Campion** was arrested by priest hunters, convicted of high treason, and **hanged, drawn and quartered** at Tyburn.





THE SPANISH MARRIAGE

A female ruler with a Spanish Catholic husband? It was all too much for the English people. And, while Mary was besotted with Philip – the dashing heir to the Spanish throne – her feelings weren't reciprocated. He sought the marriage merely for political and strategic gains

As soon as her coronation was out of the way, Mary made it clear that her first priority was to find a husband. Although her councillors assumed that she would consult them on such a weighty matter as marriage, Mary had already made up her mind. As with her faith, so her choice of husband was inspired by her mother's homeland. He was Philip of Spain, son of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

Already inclined to favour Philip because of his Spanish blood, Mary fell madly in love with him upon first seeing his portrait. She refused to listen to the vociferous opposition from her council, who feared that England would become

a mere satellite of the mighty Spanish Empire. Neither did she appreciate the strength of feeling among her xenophobic people, who were reluctant enough to accept a female ruler, let alone one who was married to a Spaniard. "The English... are most hostile by their nature to foreigners", remarked Savorgnano, the Venetian ambassador. When the marriage settlement was agreed in January 1554, it immediately sparked uprisings across much of the kingdom.

Upon meeting his English wife for the first time, Philip himself was a good deal less enamoured than she was of him and remarked that Mary was rather older than

he had been led to expect (she was 11 years his senior). But this was a marriage of politics, not passion and the wedding went ahead on 25 July. The next day, Philip confided to an attendant that his new wife was "no good from the point of view of fleshly sensuality".

Philip spent much of their four year marriage abroad. True, he had pressing business to attend to, but it was clear that he found his wife repellent and took far more of an interest in her younger half-sister Elizabeth. When he heard of Mary's death in November 1558, he expressed only "reasonable regret". It was a poor reward for her unswerving devotion.

WHAT LIES BENEATH?

Elizabeth was buried beside her half-sister Mary. The tomb reads: "Consorts both in throne and grave, here we rest two sisters, **Elizabeth and Mary**, in hope of our resurrection."



STONY FACED
Queen Elizabeth I's tomb
in Westminster Abbey

WAS MARY REALLY SO BLOODY?

UN-MERRY MONARCH
Queen Mary I
endured a life
marked by
tragedy and
heartbreak



5

The number of years
Mary was on the throne.
After Lady Jane Grey, the
'9 days queen', Mary was
the shortest-reigning
Tudor

"The 'intercessions for expectant mothers' page was stained with tears"

table and that she and her court "drank more than would fill the Valladolid river".

Mary deserves sympathy as a tragic queen, not just a bloody one. Her love for Philip of Spain was not reciprocated and he made little secret of the fact that he found her distasteful. But he did his duty because, just a few weeks into their marriage, Mary believed herself to be pregnant. Admittedly, she had many of the symptoms – her stomach had started to swell, she had ceased to menstruate and she was sick in the mornings. As tradition dictated, she entered her 'confinement', a month-long period of seclusion before a royal birth. Yet, after many weeks of waiting, she eventually had to admit defeat. It had been a phantom pregnancy. The humiliation of returning to public life with no heir to show for her long confinement must have been unbearable.

To make matters worse, the same thing happened two years later. This time,

though, only Mary believed that she was really pregnant. Others whispered that the swelling of the Queen's stomach was due to a 'tympany', or tumour. This was almost certainly the case – Mary's mother had died of stomach cancer.

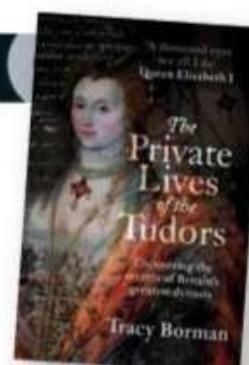
Early in the morning of 17 November 1558, having heard her final Mass, Mary slipped from a life that had been marked by tragedy and heartbreak. Among the personal effects that Mary left was a book of prayers, with a page devoted to intercessions for expectant mothers. It was stained with tears.

As everyone clamoured to welcome the new queen, Elizabeth, few seemed to care for the passing of the woman who has – unfairly – been remembered only as 'Bloody Mary'. ◎

GET HOOKED

READ

Tracy Borman is an author and historian, specialising in the Tudor period. Her books include *The Private Lives of the Tudors* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2016).



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Is it unfair that Henry VIII's eldest daughter is remembered as 'Bloody Mary'?

email: editor@historyrevealed.com

loud, almost like a man's", which did little to enhance her appeal.

But the private Mary was very different from her unfortunate public persona. One of her favourite companions in her privy chamber was her female jester, Jane Cooper, known as 'Jane Fool'. Jane had been the jester of Henry VIII's last wife Katherine Parr and may also have served Anne Boleyn. In common with other 'fools' of the period, Jane probably had learning difficulties. Mary was extremely fond of her and treated her kindly, giving her many valuable clothes and shoes. Jane repaid her with loyalty and served her royal mistress for the remainder of her reign.

AVID GAMBLER

Another indication of Mary's lighter side was the fact that she was an avid gambler and loved to play cards and board games. It was a preoccupation that had developed in childhood, and it remained one of her chief sources of delight and recreation throughout her adult life. She also kept several pets, including a parrot and a spaniel, both of which had been given to her as gifts by members of the court.

Like her father, she was fond of masques and plays, and her abiding love of music provided much-needed relief from the concerns of state. She also loved to provide entertainments and feasts for her court. One Spanish visitor claimed that she spent more than 300,000 ducats a year on her

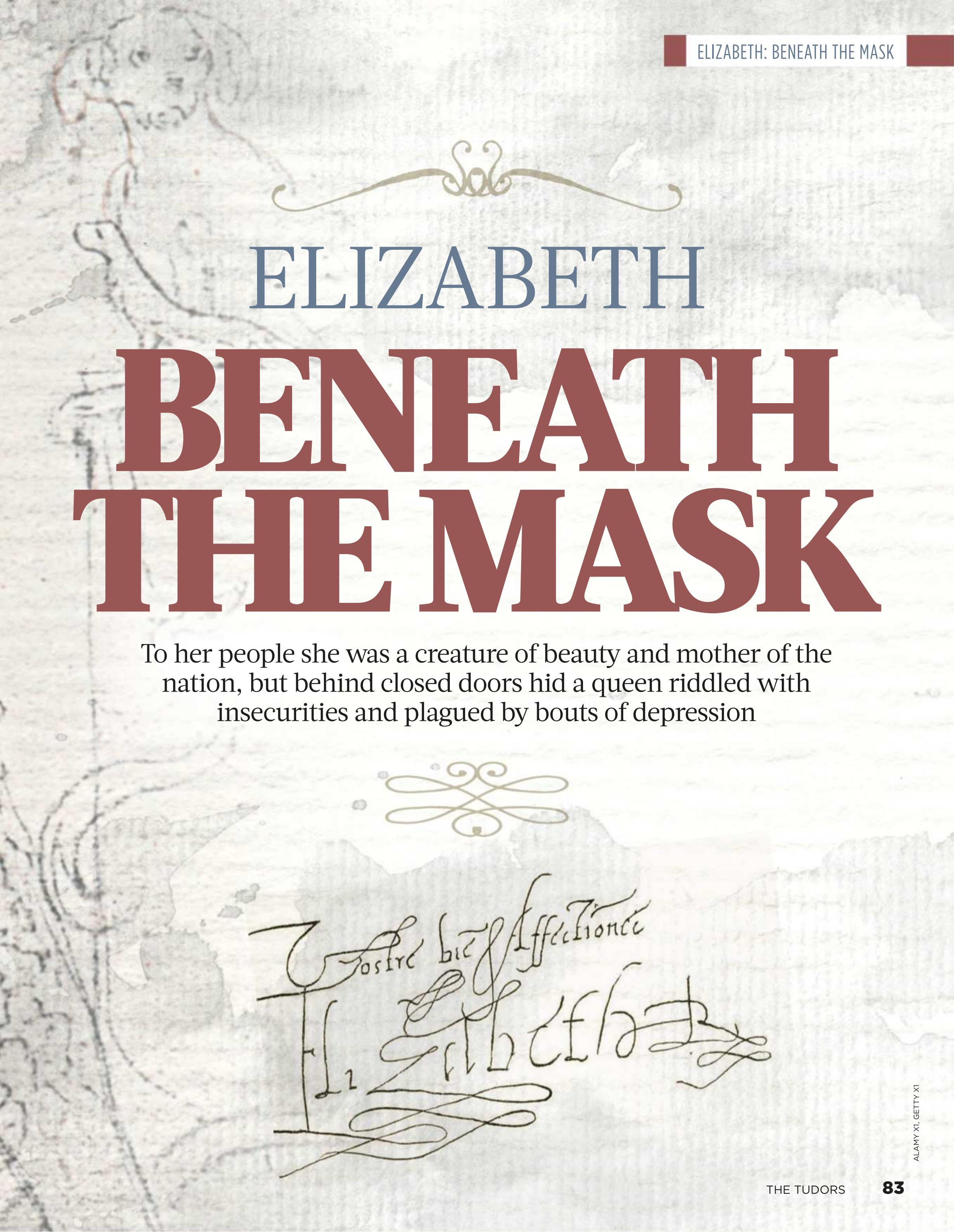
BEAUTY QUEEN

MAIN: Red chalk sketch of Elizabeth attributed to Federico Zuccaro, 1575
BOTTOM RIGHT: Elizabeth's signature graced thousands of state documents during her reign



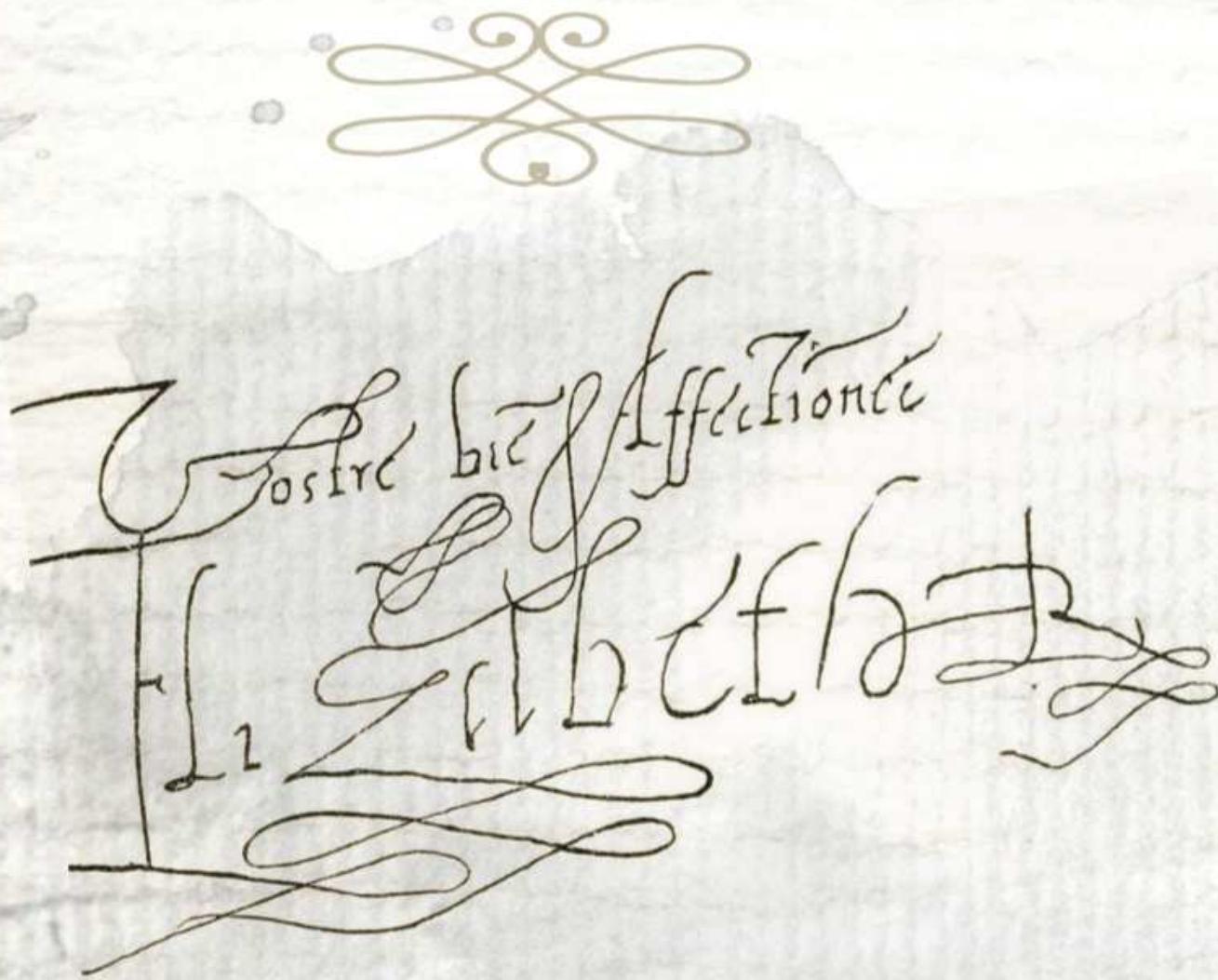
CAUGHT ON CANVAS

Robert Dudley commissioned a pair of portraits of **the Queen and himself** for display at Kenilworth Castle during Elizabeth's 19-day visit in 1575. This preparatory sketch – and another in black chalk – are all that survive of the works.



ELIZABETH BENEATH THE MASK

To her people she was a creature of beauty and mother of the nation, but behind closed doors hid a queen riddled with insecurities and plagued by bouts of depression



Elizabeth
Affectionate
Elizabeth

When Elizabeth I ascended the throne in 1558, she was the most eligible woman in Europe and, before long, had some of the most powerful men in the world clamouring for her hand in marriage.

With her father's auburn hair and her mother's dark eyes and olive complexion, Elizabeth was widely reputed to have been physically attractive, described by the Venetian ambassador Giovanni Michiel in 1557 as "tall and well formed, with a good skin, although sallow. She has fine eyes and above all a beautiful hand of which she makes a display..."

Since beauty was believed to amplify female power, it was imperative that Elizabeth outshone everyone around her, in order to support her right to the throne. And outshine them she did.

Every last part of the Queen's carefully crafted public image was honed to perfection. She designed everything to convey her right to rule in a world where women were not expected, or encouraged, to exert independent authority, and where youth, health and fertility were attributes to be celebrated above all others.

But while it was easy to portray Elizabeth as such in her youth, when her physical appearance bore witness, what was to be done as she grew older? In her later years, the Queen was obviously aging, with rotten teeth and thinning hair. She was clearly beyond childbearing age, and yet still without a

successor. The situation had the makings of an Elizabethan public relations nightmare.

PICTURE PERFECT

That Elizabeth was an unmarried female monarch could not be ignored. In fact, it had to be transcended to ensure the continued loyalty and faith of her subjects. And like monarchs before her, Elizabeth used portraiture to manipulate her public image. She employed symbols and emblems from biblical, classical and mythological sources to convey an image of an all-powerful ruler.

To deliberately encourage Elizabeth's image as the 'Virgin Queen', she adopted common symbols of virginity as personal emblems. Pearls – associated with purity – were often encrusted on Elizabeth's gowns, or hung around her neck. As the Queen walked through the halls of her royal palaces, tiny seed pearls are said to have fallen from her skirts as she moved.

The white rose of purity associated with the Virgin Mary was another popular addition to her clothing, as was the phoenix, a mythical, self-perpetuating bird and a symbol of chastity. And Elizabeth often wore crescent moon jewels in her hair, symbolic of the Roman virgin goddess, Diana.

Elizabeth's wardrobe itself was designed to impress and she never appeared in public without full make-up and sumptuous clothing. While in private she preferred to wear simple gowns, Elizabeth knew the value of clothing as a symbol of status and power, and dressed to reflect her position. "We princes, I tell you, are set

on stages in the sight and view of all the world duly observed; the eyes of many behold our actions, a spot is soon spied in our garments; a blemish noted quickly in our doings", she declared in a speech to Parliament in the 1580s.

Not that there was much chance of Elizabeth ever having to wear a marked gown: at her death in 1603, some 2,000 gowns were recorded in her wardrobe and, from an inventory compiled in 1587 by Blanche Parry, Lady of the Bedchamber, we know that Elizabeth had 628 pieces of jewellery at that time.

IMAGE CONTROL

The Queen's public image was of paramount importance. In an age without television or social media, one of the fastest ways of sharing a carefully selected image of a monarch was via money. In 1560–61, Elizabeth set about restoring the currency of England, which had been dramatically debased during the reign of Henry VIII. The old coinage, so reduced in value that it damaged trade relations and did little for the reputation of the monarchy, was withdrawn, melted, and replaced with newly minted coins of precious metal, each featuring an image of Elizabeth herself. Now every subject could own a tiny portrait of their Queen.

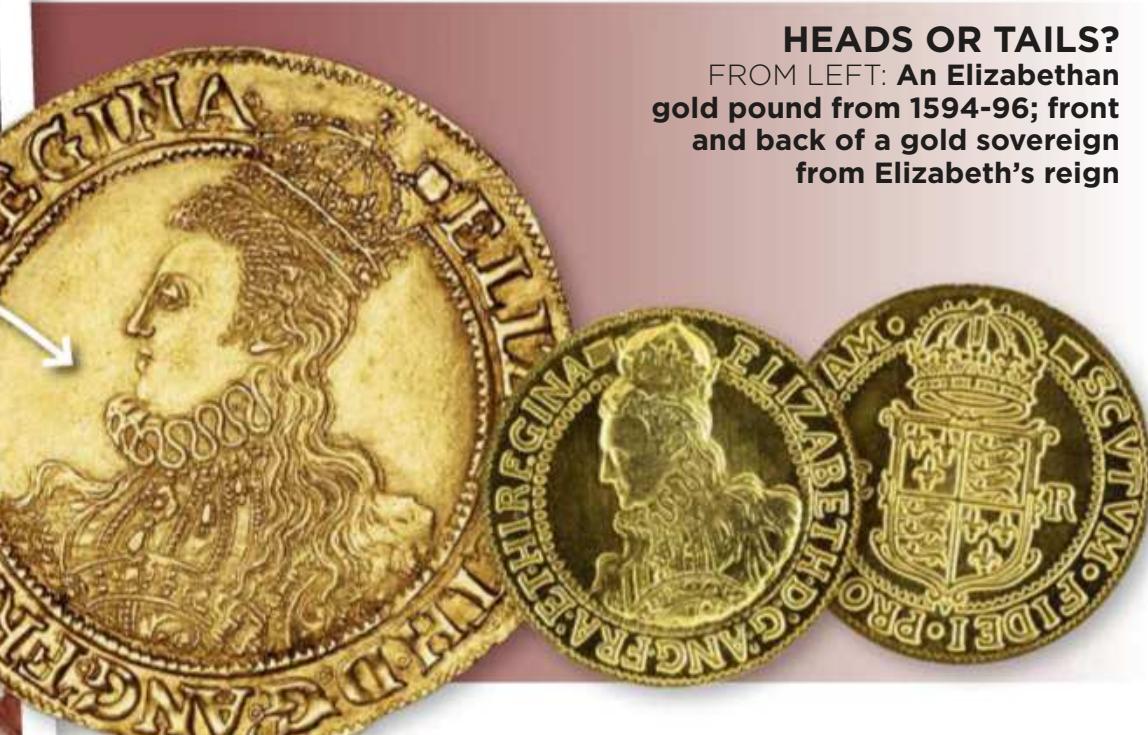
Such images of the monarch were carefully choreographed and changed little throughout her reign. In 1563, in a move to regulate the production of her portrait, Elizabeth declared that a 'pattern' would be created that should then be copied by other painters. The painting of Elizabeth known as the 'Darnley Portrait' was one such pattern. Created in around 1575–6, it was used and re-used by artists



ON ROYAL AUTHORITY
The Darnley Portrait was used as a pattern for other artists to copy

POCKET PORTAIT

Pictures of the Queen on gold coins like these were a common way of distributing approved images of Elizabeth throughout the realm, making her instantly recognisable to her subjects.



HEADS OR TAILS?

FROM LEFT: An Elizabethan gold pound from 1594-96; front and back of a gold sovereign from Elizabeth's reign

QUEEN OF ICONOGRAPHY

The emblems that sculpted Elizabeth's public image

BRUSH OF YOUTH
Despite being in her late 60s, Elizabeth is portrayed as a young monarch in this painting

TIMELESS BEAUTY

Elizabeth's smooth, wrinkle-free face has turned her into an ageless Queen – almost immortal in her appearance.

CROWNING GLORY

Supported by an elaborate headdress of rubies and pearls, Elizabeth's crown affirms her status as anointed Queen.

SYMBOLS OF PURITY

Elizabeth is covered in pearls of different shapes and sizes – drawing the viewer's attention to her purity and virginity. Even her cloak is lined with the gems.

HEAD OF STATE

High foreheads were the height of fashion in Elizabethan England and women plucked their hairlines to achieve the desired look.

FLOWER OF ENGLAND

The English flowers that adorn the Queen's gown are reminiscent of Astraea, the celestial virgin of Classical literature who is associated with innocence and purity.

RUFF TIMES

Elizabeth wears a floating ruff that would have been set into elaborate figure-of-eight folds with the use of a special iron. By the end of Elizabeth's reign, these huge ruffs had fallen out of fashion.

UNDER CONTROL

The jewelled serpent embroidered on Elizabeth's sleeve represents wisdom; the ruby it holds is her heart. Elizabeth, therefore, is controlled by her wisdom.

ALL EYES AND EARS

The Queen's cloak is covered with images of eyes and ears – as monarch she sees and hears everything.



LEFT: A lock of Elizabeth's hair sits on a poem written to her by poet Philip Sidney

MIDDLE: A pair of the Queen's gloves dating from 1566

RIGHT: Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, the man who saw Elizabeth without her 'mask of youth'



into the 1590s, helping to create the mask of youth and beauty that surrounded Elizabeth until her death.

As the Queen's closest advisor Robert Cecil commented carefully: "Her Majesty commands all manner of persons to stop doing portraits of her until a clever painter has finished one which all other painters can copy. Her Majesty, in the meantime, forbids the showing of any portraits which are ugly until they are improved."

PEELING BACK THE MASK

But beneath the image of a strong, confident and youthful monarch lay a very different woman – one that only those closest to her would ever see, and centering around the relative privacy of the royal bedchamber. Here, in the heart of Elizabeth's empire, the physical reality of the ageing Queen was disguised by a multitude of cosmetics, administered by a handful of privileged women whose task it was to guard the truth of the Queen's body.

In 1562, when she was just 29, Elizabeth caught smallpox and nearly died. The severity of her illness, and the stark reality that she could die without an heir, shook the country and for the first time Elizabeth's mortality hit home.

For Elizabeth, though, the illness had a visible long-lasting effect in the form of facial scars. Layers of white make-up – a concoction of pungent white lead and vinegar – were applied

to her face in a bid to conceal the imperfections. But the caustic cosmetic did more harm than good. The prolonged use of lead eventually ate into the Queen's skin, causing it to grey and wrinkle, and thus more of the paste was required to achieve the desired effect.

In line with Elizabethan fashion, bright patches of rouge were applied to the Queen's cheeks using crushed cochineal beetles. But as she aged, Elizabeth stepped up her quest for everlasting youth, experimenting with cutting-edge cosmetics. An intense red for use on lips and cheeks was created with vermillion, a garish pigment also known as cinnabar – or today as mercuric sulphide. This toxic substance was smeared daily on the Queen's mouth, and would have been ingested every time she licked her lips. Eventually, it is highly likely Elizabeth would have experienced the lack of co-ordination, memory loss, sensory impairment, slurred speech and depression – all symptoms linked to mercury poisoning.

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

Over the decades of Elizabeth's reign, she privately changed from a young, lithe, pretty royal with little need for make-up, to a wrinkled, black-toothed woman who spent hours every day preparing for public viewing.



HANDSOME

Elizabeth was immensely proud of her **long, slender hands** and would repeatedly put on and remove her gloves to draw attention to them.



TRAPPINGS OF ROYALTY

LEFT: A lock of Elizabeth's hair sits on a poem written to her by poet Philip Sidney

MIDDLE: A pair of the Queen's gloves dating from 1566

RIGHT: Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, the man who saw Elizabeth without her 'mask of youth'

Her love of sweet foods meant that she frequently suffered from toothache, and many of her teeth fell out. Once, just before her 45th birthday, the pain in her teeth and gums proved unbearable and she consented to an extraction. Afraid of pain and unwilling – perhaps for vanity's sake – to lose a tooth, Elizabeth finally allowed doctors to perform the procedure only after John Aylmer, Bishop of London, had one of his own extracted in front of her. Reassured, Elizabeth finally agreed to the action.

What's more, her red-gold hair, once Elizabeth's crowning glory and tangible evidence of her Tudor heritage, began to thin soon after she took to the throne and she had to wear wigs to disguise her hair loss.

But while Elizabeth could disguise physical imperfections such as her lack of hair and scarred face, some health problems were harder to hide. The question of the Queen's ability to bear children and the irregular menstruation that she had endured since childhood were on the rumour mill throughout Europe.

So anxious was Elizabeth to demonstrate her health and vigour to the world that she often felt compelled to perform feats of exercise before her court. She would dance energetically with foreign ambassadors, lead hunts and spurn medicine in public.

But even in the privacy of her bedchamber, Elizabeth was still under constant scrutiny. Her ladies were often bribed by foreign ambassadors for intimate details of the ruler's private life – from her menstrual cycle to her virginity.

As she grew older, less youthful and more suspicious, Elizabeth took great pains to ensure only those closest to her saw her in her

15

The number of years Elizabeth kept Dudley's final letter to her – it was found in a box by her bed after her death

RAVAGES OF AGE

The truth behind Elizabeth's outward 'mask of youth'

TRUE REFLECTION
Elizabeth I, at around 62. Such an honest portrayal of the ageing Queen was very unusual

COVER UP

Following a severe bout of smallpox in 1562, Elizabeth was never seen in public without her trademark white make-up, which covered the scars left by the disease. In reality, the caustic concoction made her skin grey and wrinkled.

HIDDEN AILMENTS

In the final weeks of her life, Elizabeth suffered from a painful swelling in her throat, which eventually burst.

ELIZABETHAN BLING

Elizabeth's love of jewellery is well recorded, but as she aged, her jewels took on another role. According to Sir Francis Bacon, the Queen believed people "would be diverted by the glitter of her jewels, from noticing the decay of her personal attractions".

WEAK CONSTITUTION

Elizabeth suffered from migraines, irregular menstruation and occasional fainting fits for most of her adult life. She was also very shortsighted, which would have made affairs of state hard work.

BAD HAIR DAYS

Elizabeth began to lose her hair relatively early in her reign, and took to wearing wigs in public.

BLACK TEETH

Elizabeth had a love of sweet things, which caused many of her teeth to fall out, leaving her with a hollow-cheeked appearance. She would often stuff her cheeks with rags to fill them out, but that made her speech hard to understand.

MATURE MAIDEN

Elizabeth favoured clothes of white or black as these symbolised virginity and purity. Even as an older woman, a great deal of emphasis continued to be placed on her virginal status.

REVEALING LADY

Elizabeth was not shy of revealing a little flesh in public, even as an older woman. In fact, in 1597, a French ambassador recorded that "She kept the front of her dress open, and one could see the whole of her bosom... often she would open the front of this robe with her hands as if she was too hot".



EXPERT VIEW

*Historian
and author
Anna Whitelock*

ELIZABETH RETAINS A POWERFUL MYSTIQUE OF THE UNKNOWABLE

Why are we so fascinated by Elizabeth?

Elizabeth I is something of an enigma: powerful, charismatic and glamorous, a learned stateswoman, warrior queen and the eternally youthful woman who, she claimed, remained a virgin her whole life. While the image of Elizabeth as Queen is a familiar one, she retains a powerful mystique of the unknown and unknowable.

How significant is Elizabeth's reign to British history?

Elizabeth played a central role in the making of Anglo-British national identity and culture. During her reign, England was established as a Protestant nation, exploration of the New World gathered pace and the first steps made towards colonisation. Although not the first woman to wear the crown of England, Elizabeth was the first woman to show that gender wasn't necessarily a limitation to the exercise of authority and the success of a monarch.

Would Elizabeth's reign have been different had she married?

Yes, indeed. Women were regarded as the 'inferior' sex and so a king was needed to take on the greater part of government. It was also essential to have an heir to secure the succession. If Elizabeth had married, she would arguably not have sustained the interest and mystique that has endured over the centuries.

How far did the Queen's public and private lives overlap?

There was really no such thing as a private life for a monarch at this time. The Queen's body was held to represent the very state itself and the health, sanctity and prolificacy of it determined the stability of the realm. Illness, sexual immorality and infertility were political concerns. Elizabeth's life behind closed doors was therefore the focus of much scrutiny and gossip.



FINAL HOURS

In her last moments, Elizabeth I is surrounded by her ladies in waiting and closest advisors

PREPARING FOR DEATH

Although Elizabeth's health deteriorated quickly, she refused to go to bed, choosing instead to lie on cushions on the floor, cared for by ladies of her bedchamber.

◀ natural state – without wig, make-up or robes. But in September 1599, Elizabeth's 'mask of youth' was well and truly torn off when royal favourite Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, burst into her bedchamber unannounced. Devereux, it was reported, "found the Queen newly up" with wisps of grey thinning hair "hanging about her ears", no make-up and dressed in a simple robe. It was a sight that none of Elizabeth's court should have been privy to, and the monarch was mortified.

A QUEEN AT ODDS

Elizabeth's skill as an orator and her devotion to England is well documented, but her public displays of dignified queenly duty were often at odds with her behaviour behind closed doors. For a woman who publicly declared that she had "the heart and stomach of a king", Elizabeth's subjects would have been shocked to learn that their Queen was scared of the dark. So too, would they be surprised by the notion of their monarch suffering from regular nightmares – especially after the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots – after which she would need comforting. In the dark of night, Elizabeth would lie awake, fretting about decisions she had made, or was under pressure to make, and she suffered from insomnia for most of her life.

Towards the end of her reign, Elizabeth was also prone to bouts of depression, particularly as she began outliving those she loved most. In 1588, as she was being publicly celebrated in

the wake of victory over the Spanish Armada, Elizabeth shut herself away at St James's Palace, mourning the loss of her close friend Robert Dudley who had died unexpectedly, just weeks after the battle.

The execution of Devereux, the man who had so ignominiously burst into the Queen's bedchamber, was another blow to the her fragile state of mind. She became more reclusive, and began to keep to the relative safety of her privy chamber, away from the watchful eyes of court.

As it became harder to keep the aging process at bay, less-than-complimentary comments about Elizabeth's looks began to be reported by foreign ambassadors. In 1597, the 65-year-old Queen was described in a letter by the French ambassador: "As for her face, it is and appears to be very aged. It is long and thin, and her teeth are very yellow and unequal... Many of them are missing so that one cannot understand her easily when she speaks quickly."

IN THE DARK OF NIGHT ELIZABETH WOULD LIE AWAKE, FRETTING ABOUT DECISIONS SHE HAD MADE

For a queen who loved to be adored, growing old so publicly must have been agonising. Yet to her subjects, she remained Gloriana, the Virgin Queen, who had eschewed marriage to become mother of the

nation. On Elizabeth's death in 1603, thousands turned out for her funeral, lamenting the passing of their beloved monarch.

"There was such a general sighing, groaning and weeping," wrote chronicler John Stow, "as the like hath not been seen or known in the memory of man." Gloriana was dead, but her image would live on. ◎

GET HOOKED!

Continue your journey into the Elizabeth's world – Gloriana awaits...

PLACES TO VISIT



▲ HATFIELD HOUSE, HERTFORDSHIRE

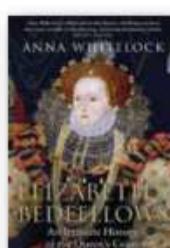
Visit the house where Elizabeth spent many childhood years, and see the spot where she heard the news of her accession.

www.hatfield-house.co.uk

ALSO LOOK OUT FOR

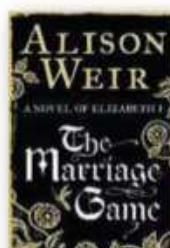
- Step inside the reconstructed Globe Theatre, London
- Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire, where Elizabeth visited Dudley
- See the Tower of London, where the Queen was imprisoned

BOOKS



ELIZABETH'S BEDFELLOWS: AN INTIMATE HISTORY OF THE QUEEN'S COURT
by Anna Whitelock

A fascinating insight into the 'private' life of Elizabeth I.



THE MARRIAGE GAME

by Alison Weir
Alison Weir's story of Elizabeth's relationships with her suitors makes for some exciting historical fiction.

ALSO LOOK OUT FOR

- Elizabeth: Apprenticeship by David Starkey
- Terrifying Tudors from the Horrible Histories range, by Terry Deary
- The Children of Henry VIII by John Guy
- Legacy a historical novel by Susan Kay

ON SCREEN



ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE (2007)

Cate Blanchett plays Queen Elizabeth I in the latter part of her reign, portraying her personal and political struggles.

ALSO LOOK OUT FOR

- The Channel 4 docu-series, *David Starkey's Elizabeth* (2007)
- Miranda Richardson as a giddy, squeaky, entertaining Elizabeth in *Blackadder II* (1986)



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**GREAT VICTORY
OR LUCKY ESCAPE?**

Elizabeth I crushed the Spanish Armada, thanks to the enemy's poor strategy, awful weather and some help from her 'Dragon', Francis Drake



THE SPANISH ARMADA

How did the English defeat Spain's 'invincible' fleet, and how did it shape their naval supremacy in centuries to come? **Julian Humphrys** investigates...

Across the water, a single burning light moved through the midnight darkness. Then another, and another. Eventually, eight were seen. For the lookouts of the Spanish Armada, it was the sight they'd been dreading. The Spanish knew exactly what these flames were. The English had taken eight ships, packed them with pitch, rags and old timber, daubed the masts and decks with tar and silently sailed them towards the Armada, as it lay anchored off Calais. They'd then set them alight before escaping in boats towed behind the vessels.

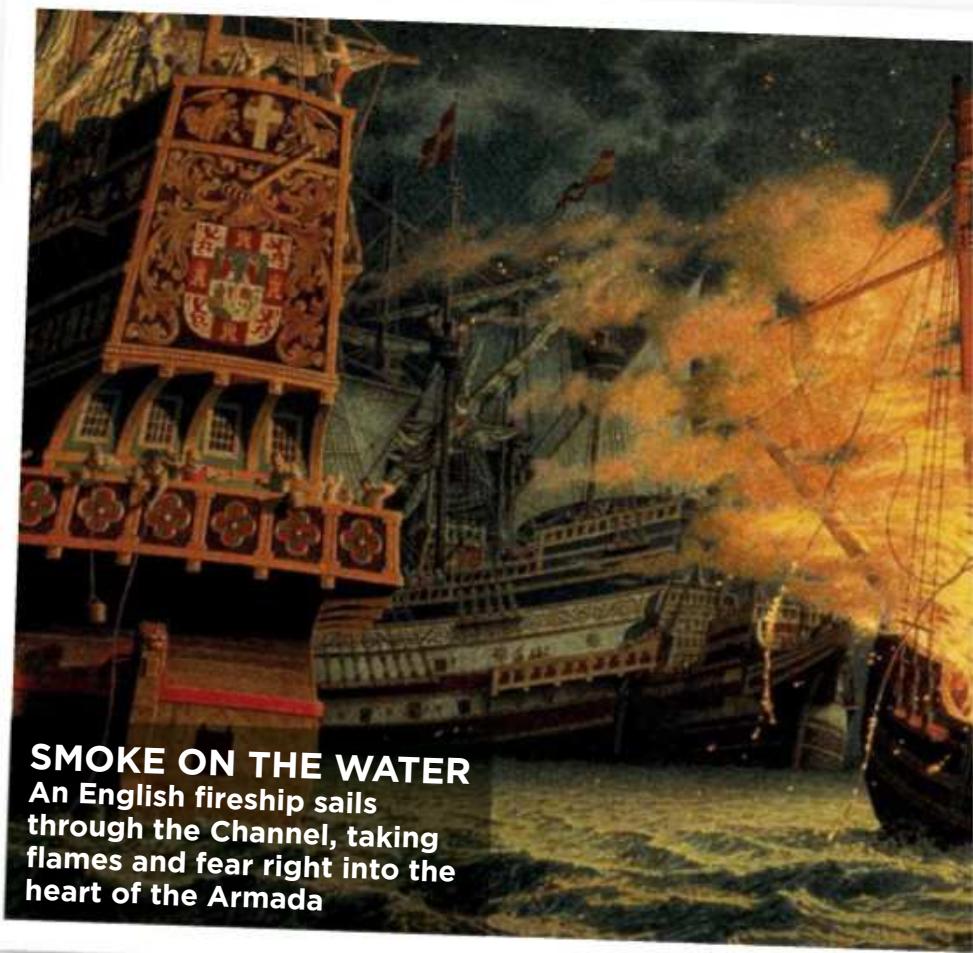
The Spanish intercepted two of the blazing ships, but the others drifted on, right into the heart of the fleet. Fear took hold of the Spaniards. Fear that the floating infernos would set their own vessels on fire or, worse still, that they were packed with gunpowder and may explode at any moment. The Spanish captains panicked. Cutting their anchor cables, they made for the safety of the open sea. When dawn broke, the Spanish Armada was scattered out to sea and the English were ready to move in for the kill.

2
The number of days it took for all of the ships in the Armada to leave Lisbon port

On the face of it, Philip's plan for the invasion of England had been a simple one. A large fleet packed with soldiers would sail up the English Channel, join forces with the Duke of Parma's Spanish army, stationed at Flanders, which would be waiting for it at Calais, before sailing across to England together. Once ashore, Parma's veteran soldiers would have no trouble in sweeping aside the often shambolic English militia.

But it was a plan full of pitfalls. Not only did the Armada have the ships of their English and Dutch enemies to contend with, they were also at the mercy of the winds and weather – a dangerous state of affairs as they had no channel ports of their own to shelter in. Close co-operation between Parma and the Duke of Medina Sidonia, the

“The blazing ships drifted on, right into the heart of the Spanish fleet”



SMOKE ON THE WATER
An English fireship sails through the Channel, taking flames and fear right into the heart of the Armada

fleet Commander, was essential, but this was an age when rapid communications were virtually impossible. To make matters worse, the Marquis of Santa Cruz, Spain's best admiral and the one man who might have brought the enterprise to a successful conclusion, had died in the previous year. Medina Sidonia, his reluctant replacement, was a brave, conscientious man and a fine administrator but he was, by his own admission, no sailor. He told the Spanish

DEFENDER OF THE REALM

Queen Elizabeth

On 19 August 1588, Elizabeth addressed her troops at Tilbury. Wearing a man's breastplate and mounted on a white horse, she delivered one of the most famous speeches ever made by a British monarch:

“I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of my subjects... I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too – and take foul scorn that Parma or any other prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm.”

When Elizabeth made that speech, the ships of the Armada were hundreds of miles away, approaching the northern coast of Scotland on their retreat to Spain. That night, she returned to St James' Palace and the next day she ordered an immediate demobilisation of her forces. This was partly because many of the men were needed to help with the harvest, but an equally pressing issue was the fact that her forces in

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH

Cate Blanchett speaks to the troops at Tilbury in *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* (2007)

Essex and Kent were costing over £783 a day (some £98,000 in modern money). Indeed, from start to finish, the government's response to the crisis was cast with a somewhat penny-pinching attitude. Francis Drake worried that, by disbanding her forces too quickly, Elizabeth might be risking her kingdom “for the sake of a little change”.

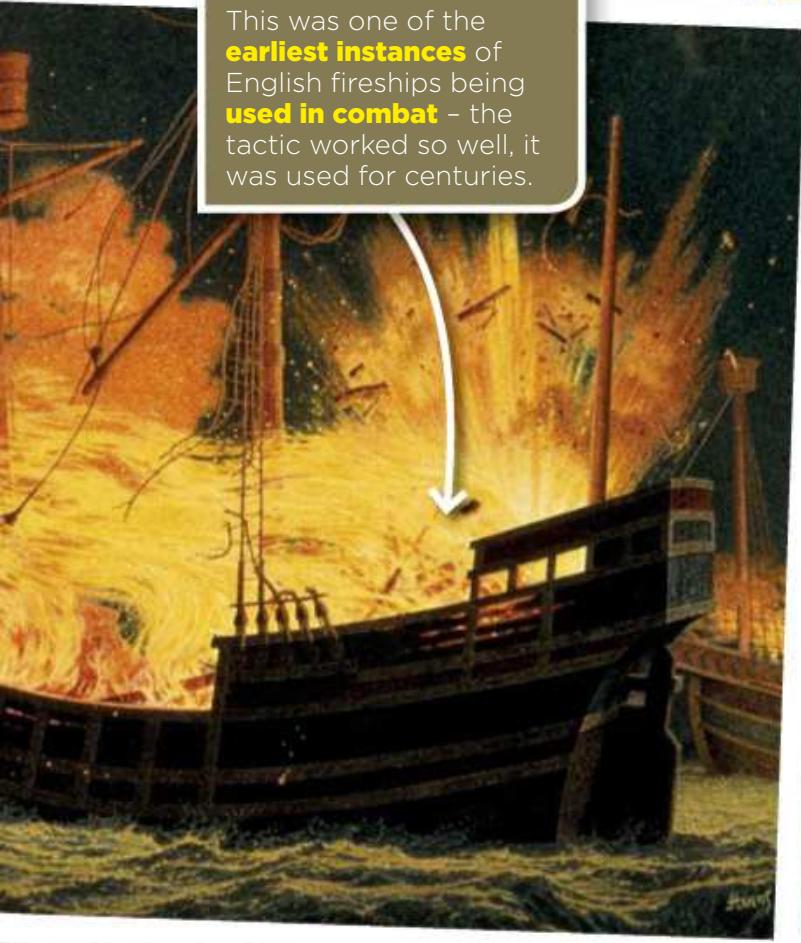
But, in reality, the government had little choice. It had begun the year virtually bankrupt and had been obliged to resort to a forced loan of £75,000 (the equivalent of more than £9.3 million) from its richer subjects to tide it over.

Ultimately, the highest price was paid by the men who had given Elizabeth her victory – the sailors of her fleet. More than half those who had fought the Armada died from disease or starvation. Of the £167,000 spent on the campaign, just £180 went to help the injured. Lord High Admiral Charles Howard was reduced to printing licences that allowed his maimed soldiers to beg.



TRAIL BLAZING

This was one of the **earliest instances** of English fireships being **used in combat** – the tactic worked so well, it was used for centuries.



King: "I know by the small experience I have had afloat that I soon become sea-sick."

FALSE START

The Armada sailed from Lisbon at the end of May but, on 19 June, it was forced to put into Corunna in north Spain after supplies were found to be rotting – the previous year, Francis Drake (see *Drake the Dragon*, page 96) had raided



MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE
Spain's Philip II and England's Mary I were married in 1554

A CATHOLIC CRUSADER

Philip II of Spain

It would be a mistake to think that Philip of Spain had long wanted an open war with Elizabeth of England. On the contrary, he'd spent years trying to avoid one. For much of the first half of the 16th century England and Spain had been allies against their common enemy, France. In 1554, Philip married Mary Tudor and the pair jointly ruled England as King and Queen. But the marriage was not a success. It produced no heirs and the English resented being a minor part of Philip's large empire. Matters were made worse when England was dragged into Philip's war with France and ended up losing Calais.

When Mary died in 1558, Philip ceased to be King of England, so he proposed marriage to his wife's successor, the Protestant Elizabeth. While this would have ensured that there was no prospect of her allying with France and would have enabled him to help England's Catholics, in truth, the prospect of marrying someone he regarded as an illegitimate heretic appalled him. He was probably relieved when she declined.

At this stage, although Philip would have liked to return England to the Catholic fold, he was reluctant to overthrow the English

PHILIP II (1527-98)

King of Spain, Portugal, Naples, Sicily, Lord of the Netherlands and ruler of Spanish territories in the New World, Philip was also King of England during his marriage to Mary Tudor. A devout Catholic, Philip led the Catholic coalition that defeated the Turks at Lepanto in 1571. From 1566, he was faced with rebellion among his Protestant subjects in the Netherlands and spent the last eight years of his life at war with the (initially Protestant) Henry IV of France.

ELIZABETH I (1533-1603)

The daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth succeeded her half-sister Mary as Queen in November 1558. As a Protestant, Catholic Europe saw her as an illegitimate heretic. She re-established Protestantism as the state religion, privately encouraged English privateers (like Drake – see page 96) to attack the Spanish and gave financial and military assistance to the Dutch Protestant rebels in the Spanish Netherlands.



Queen, mainly because of her obvious replacement, Mary Queen of Scots, who had close links with his enemy, France. On the other hand, if he failed to act, England's Catholics might look to France for support instead. So, for many years, Philip made all the right noises but did nothing concrete.

What led to Philip's change in policy? Publicly, Philip always asserted that his primary aim was to restore England to Catholicism, essential if he was going to get assistance from the Papacy, but there were other more pressing diplomatic and political causes. Philip was particularly concerned about the increase of English attacks on his treasure ships for the antics of men like Francis Drake were seriously damaging his reputation. The last straw came in the Spanish Netherlands, where Philip's subjects had been in rebellion for more than 15 years. In 1585, Elizabeth formally took them under her protection, accepting limited sovereign powers and sending English troops to occupy key fortifications. This, more than anything, pushed Philip into action. For, not only did Elizabeth's actions threaten to prolong the rebellion, they were, in Philip's eyes, an invasion of his territory and a direct challenge to his sovereignty.



PROPAGANDA TOOL
Elizabeth made the most of her victory, ensuring that the Armada (top left) featured in this official portrait



FIRST SIGHT
Firelight carried news of the Armada's arrival across England

“Warning beacons were lit. Soon, the whole of England knew the Spanish were on their way”

Cadiz, destroying so many barrel staves (the wood used to make barrels) that unseasoned ones had to be used instead – and Medina Sidonia advised Philip to delay sailing because of the shortages. Philip was having none of it. Brushing aside Medina Sidonia's objections, he wrote: “I have dedicated this enterprise to God... pull yourself together then and do your part.”

Meanwhile the English fleet, which was under the command of the Lord High Admiral Charles Howard, with Drake as his Vice Admiral, had been concentrating at Plymouth. It left the port for a pre-emptive attack on the Armada but, after two weeks at sea, adverse winds forced it to return home.

On 21 July, the Armada sailed from Corunna, battling north-eastwards through storms before, on 29 July, passing the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall. Warning beacons were lit on shore. Soon, the whole of England knew the Spanish were on their way. The Armada reached Plymouth the following day – it was then that one of the most famous episodes in the whole story

purportedly took place. Howard and Drake are said to have been enjoying a game of bowls on Plymouth Hoe when a breathless Captain Fleming (commander of one of the small vessels sent out to provide early warning of a Spanish attack) arrived with the news that the Spanish were out to sea. According to folklore,

Drake calmly replied “We have time to finish the game and beat the Spaniards too”. While we'll never know whether the game, and the quip, actually occurred, it was by no means impossible. The English were faced with a flood tide running into Plymouth Harbour and the wind was against them; there was no way the defenders could have left until the sea waters ebbed later that evening.

The next morning, the 100 or so ships of the English fleet assembled off Plymouth, ready for battle. It would be understandable to think that Howard would have positioned his fleet in front

34
The number of first-rank warships in England's Royal Fleet

THE ARMADA IN ACTION

England's navy meets the 'invincible' Spanish fleet in the Channel

1 28 MAY Lisbon

The Spanish Armada sets sail from Lisbon under the command of the Duke of Medina Sidonia.

2 END OF MAY Plymouth

English troops and ships concentrate at Plymouth, under the command of Lord High Admiral Charles Howard.

3 19 JUNE Corunna

The Armada makes a month-long stop at Corunna to resupply. It sets sail again on 21 July and, on 29 July, the Armada is sighted from the Lizard Peninsula, Cornwall.

4 31 JULY Off the coast of Plymouth

The two fleets face each other in the water – the English take a westward position, upwind of the Spanish, while the Armada adopts a crescent formation. At around 9am, the English open fire. The fighting draws to a close by 1pm.

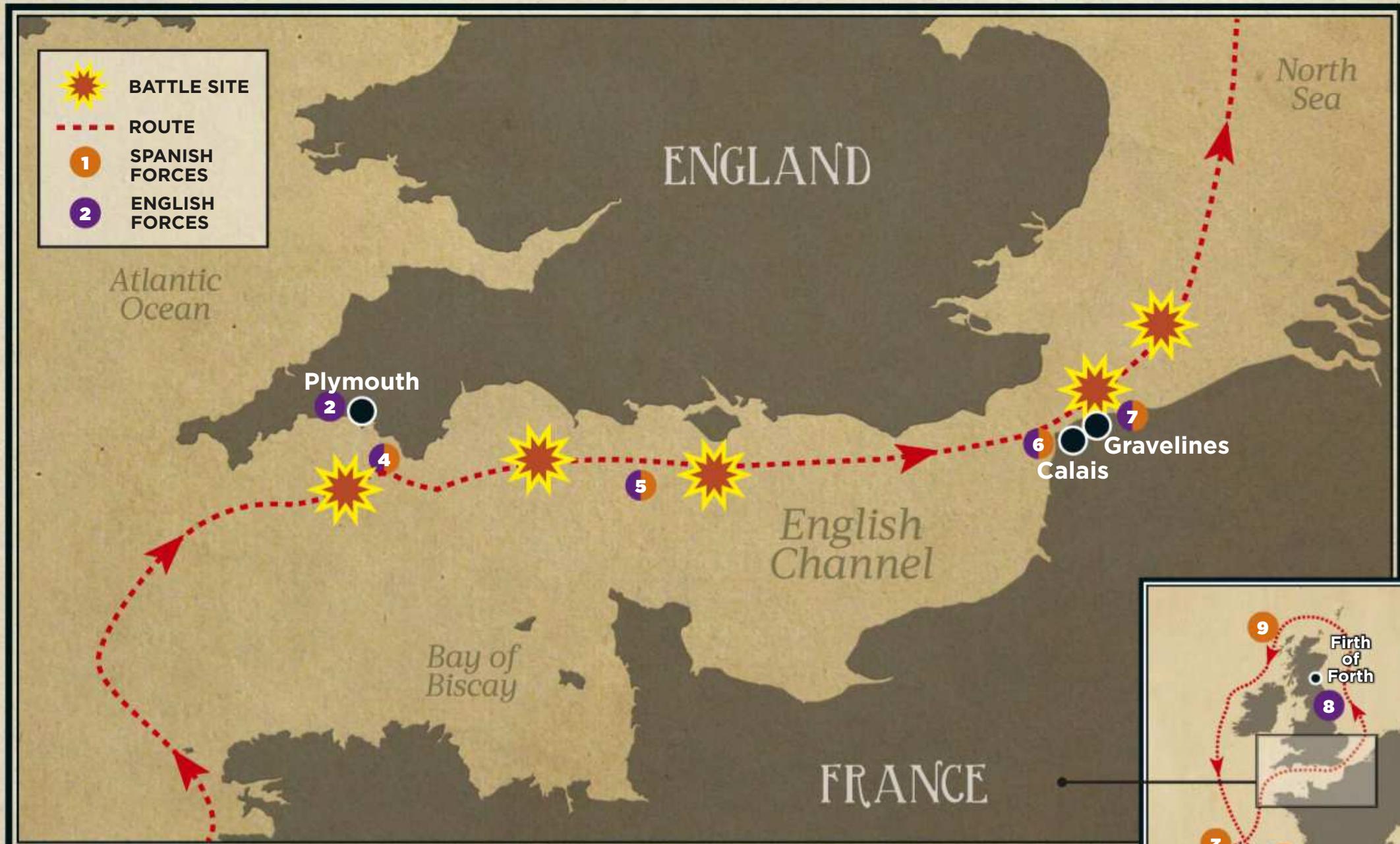
5 2-5 AUGUST Along the Channel

The Armada moves up the Channel towards Calais, harassed all the way by the English fleet.



FULL TIME
According to legend, rakish Drake wasn't ready to give up on his game of bowls when the Spanish arrived

of the Armada, in order to block its progress up the Channel. In fact, he did just the opposite. The chief reason for this lies in the tactics employed by the two fleets. The Spaniards still used the old-fashioned techniques of grappling and boarding – they would try to manoeuvre alongside enemy ships so that their



6 AUGUST Calais

The Armada reaches Calais, where the promised troops fail to show. On the night of 7-8 August, the English send in fireships, which scatter the Armada.

7 AUGUST Gravelines

The English fleet attacks, taking out 11 ships. Medina Sidonia decides to return to Calais, but the elements are against him; instead his own fleet is nearly dashed against the Flemish coast, before the wind changes direction, allowing it to flee north. Now, the only route back to Spain was a 2,000-mile route around the north of Scotland.

8 12 AUGUST Firth of Forth

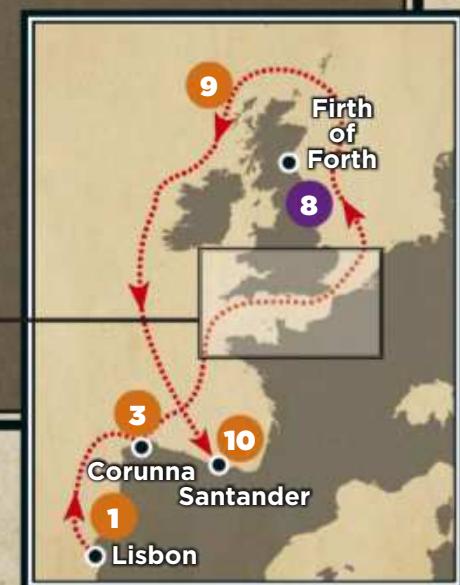
Having pursued the Armada north, the English – now short on food supplies – abandon the chase.

9 21 AUGUST Off the coast of north-west Scotland

On the Atlantic side of Scotland, the Armada is beleaguered by tempests. At least 27 of the ships are wrecked.

10 21 SEPTEMBER Santander

Medina Sidonia finally reaches northern Spain – he has lost as many as 20,000 men.



A PLUNDER ON THE SIDE

Raiding the Rosario

The Armada battle had barely started when one Spanish ship, the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*, was involved in two collisions that immobilised her, forcing the Spaniards to leave her behind. That night, to ensure that the English didn't blunder into the Armada in the darkness, Francis Drake was given the task of leading the fleet with a lantern on the stern of his ship, the *Revenge*. At one stage, the light vanished only to reappear a little later. Admiral Howard gave chase to catch up with it but,

as dawn broke, he realised that Drake was nowhere to be seen. The light he was following came not from the *Revenge* but from the Armada. To avoid being overwhelmed, he beat a hasty retreat.

Where had Drake gone? It seems that his piratical instincts had got the better of him, and he'd sailed off to seize the discarded *Rosario*. Drake took 50,000 ducats from the ship, which was later stripped of its weapons and powder to spread around the English fleet.

A PRIZE HAUL

The *Rosario* is towed into Torbay in Devon by Drake's ship *Revenge*



Fellow English privateer and a fleet commander that day Martin Frobisher was furious, claiming Drake's greed had endangered the entire mission: "Like a coward he kept by her [the *Rosario*] all night because he would have the spoil... We will have our shares or I will make him spend the best blood in his belly."

THE SCOURGE OF SPAIN

Francis Drake the Dragon

Francis Drake rose from relatively humble beginnings in Devon to become probably the most famous of all English seafarers. Drake had spells as a military commander, an MP and a slaver (he took part in one of the first English slaving expeditions to Africa) but he's best-known for his extraordinary career as a privateer – a state-sponsored pirate.

He followed successful raids on the Spanish in the early 1570s with a voyage round the world at the end of the decade. During his circumnavigation, he carried out a series of highly profitable attacks on Spanish ships and ports – acts that were backed by numerous courtiers and covertly encouraged by the Queen. The voyage netted £160,000 for the treasury (of which he took a healthy percentage) and earned Drake a knighthood. After a privateering raid on the West Indies from 1585-86, he launched a daring attack, in 1587, on Cadiz. This happened to disrupt Armada preparations, and he even captured a Spanish treasure ship named the *San Felipe* on his way home. Such activities hardly endeared him to the Spanish who called him *El Draque* – 'The Dragon'.

During the Armada campaign he served as a Vice Admiral, with a squadron of 39 ships, although some of his actions suggested he was as concerned with lining his own pockets as he was with defending the realm. Although Drake then helped set up the 'Chatham Chest', a fund for injured sailors, his career went downhill after the Armada. He was joint leader of the disastrous Counter-Armada of 1589, and his final expedition to the Caribbean in 1595 was equally unsuccessful and saw his death, probably from dysentery.

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X2, MOVIE STILLS X1



MAKING ENEMIES
Drake (right) launches a raid on Cadiz in 1587 – one of many ways the English privateer angered the Spanish

DAY OF DESTRUCTION

With a fleet of **30 ships**, Drake's 1587 raid on Cadiz lasted just **36 hours**, in which time his men destroyed numerous ships as well as tons of supplies, all intended for Philip's Armada.

soldiers could swarm across and capture them in hand-to-hand combat. The English, however, preferred to use their cannons to bombard their enemies at long range. Had the English tried to block the Armada, the Spanish ships would have been able to close with them, instigating a melee in which the superior English firepower would have been negated and the Spanish advantage in numbers could have proved decisive. So, Howard manoeuvred his fleet westwards, positioning it upwind of the Armada.

INTIMIDATING SIGHT

Contemporaries, English and Spanish alike, all agreed that the Armada, with its bright sails, fluttering coloured pennants and forest of masts, made a magnificent, intimidating sight. An Italian eye-witness later commented "You could hardly see the sea... The masts and rigging, the towering sterns and prows which in height and number were so great that they... caused horror mixed with wonder."

Medina Sidonia and his deputy, Admiral Recalde had deployed the impressive fleet in a lunula, or crescent moon, formation, placing the more vulnerable transport ships in the centre. If the English tried to attack these weaker targets, they risked being engulfed by the rest of the Armada. Their only option was to attack the horns of



“The terror-stricken Armada was scattered off Gravelines”

the crescent, where the Spanish had positioned their strongest ships.

At about 9am, the English approached. The soldiers on board the Spanish ships stood to their arms and rolled out netting to repel boarders, but the English wouldn't be drawn. Instead, they stood off at a distance, bombarding the Armada with shot until they ran short of ammunition. By 1pm, the fighting had died out. The Armada had been well and truly peppered (the English are reported to have fired 2,000 shots to the Spaniards' 750). A number of the Spanish ships had suffered light damage and human casualties were high, mainly from the deadly shards of wood that flew through the air when a ship was struck by a cannonball.

But the English had been unable to break up the Armada, and the only ships to be lost were the *Rosario*, which was damaged in a collision (see *Raiding the Rosario*, page 95), and the *San Salvador*, crippled by a vast explosion that claimed

the lives of over 200 of its men. The Spanish tried to tow the *San Salvador* away but, eventually, had to abandon the ship to the English, who quickly took its powder and shot for their own use.

The next few days saw continued fighting as the Armada slowly made its way up the Channel, harried all the way by Howard's ships. Despite an enormous expenditure of powder and shot, no significant damage was caused to either fleet. A major action was fought off the Isle of Wight, with Drake in command of the largest contingent of English ships. Once again, the Armada held together, but the battle prevented them from anchoring in the sheltered waters of the Solent while they waited to link up with the Duke of Parma and his men.

BAD TO WORSE

On 6 August, the Armada arrived off Calais, where it dropped anchor and waited for news of Parma. The news,

150
The approximate number of vessels in the Spanish Armada



SPANISH DEFENCE
A contemporary depiction of the effective crescent formation utilised by the Armada

when it eventually came, wasn't good. Parma was still at Bruges and hadn't even begun embarking his troops. The following night, the English launched their dreaded fireships.

The morning of 8 August saw the terror-stricken Armada scattered off Gravelines (near Calais). As Medina Sidonia desperately tried to reassemble his disorganised fleet, the English moved in, battering the ships of the Armada with cannon fire while nimbly avoiding Spanish attempts to board them. It was said that, by the end of the fighting, some of the Spanish ships were so low on ammunition that they could only reply to the English cannons with their muskets. Casualty figures aren't known, but it's thought that, while the English

FIRE IN THE HOLE
The two sides exchange gunfire in the 2007 biopic *Elizabeth: The Golden Age*



WATERY FURNACE
The Armada is defeated in this dramatic interpretation of the battle off Gravelines

“When the Armada entered the storm-wracked north Atlantic, the real nightmare began”

escaped fairly lightly, the Spanish suffered heavy human losses and 11 of their ships were lost or badly damaged.

Despite the pounding, the Armada somehow managed to regain its defensive formation and Medina Sidonia was still prepared to fight on. But now he had an added danger to contend with – the wind and tide was driving his ships inexorably towards the sandbanks on the Flemish coast. It seemed only a matter of time before ship after ship would run aground. Then, at the very last minute, the air currents shifted and the Armada was able to move northwards – away from the shore.

Medina Sidonia held a council of war and it was agreed that what remained of the Armada would try to return to Calais if the wind allowed them to. It didn't. With the wind blowing relentlessly from the south west, they were left with only one alternative – to continue northwards around Scotland, returning to Spain on a 2,000-mile journey through unknown waters in damaged ships.

Leaving a squadron of ships under Sir Henry Seymour to guard the Channel against Parma, Howard gave chase with the rest of the English fleet.

On 12 August the English, weakened by sickness and by now desperately short of food and ammunition, abandoned the pursuit as the Armada reached the Firth of Forth.

EYE OF THE STORM

When the depleted Armada rounded the northern coast of Scotland on 21 August, it entered the storm-wracked North Atlantic. It was now that the real nightmare began.

Over the next few weeks, at least 27 ships were wrecked on the north and west coasts of Scotland and Ireland. Thousands drowned. Those who did manage to make it ashore found no refuge. Sir William

Fitzwilliam, the English Lord Deputy of Ireland, had ordered that all Spanish survivors from the shipwrecks on the west coast of Ireland should be put to death.

On 21 September, a despondent Medina Sidonia reached Santander in northern Spain. Writing to Philip, he said “The misfortunes and miseries that have befallen us... are the worst that have been known on any voyage”. Of the

60
The number of ships in the Armada that managed to return to Spain



VICTORY MEDAL
One of the many medals to commemorate the Armada's defeat – it reads 'God blew with His wind and they were scattered' in Latin

129 ships that had set sail for England, at least 50 had been wrecked or sunk. Over 12,000 men had been lost.

The English saw it all as a sign of divine support for the Protestant cause and triumphantly cast medals with the motto “God blew and they were scattered”. But Philip wasn't the kind of man to give up after the first setback. In his eyes, the Armada may have failed, but it had come within a whisker of success. On 12 November, as the English prepared for a service of thanksgiving in St Paul's Cathedral, Philip informed his Council of State: “I, for my part, shall never fail to strive for the cause of God and the good of these kingdoms...” The war would go on. ☀

GET HOOKED

READ

The Spanish Armada by Robert Hutchinson (Phoenix, 2014)

WATCH

Elizabeth: the Golden Age (2007), starring Cate Blanchett

VISIT

The Golden Hinde II, a full-size reconstruction at Pickfords Wharf, London www.goldenhinde.com

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

WAR AND PEACE

The Spanish Armada was just one episode in an undeclared war that ran from 1585 until 1604. Throughout that period, England continued to support Dutch rebels against Spain, while the Spanish supported rebellions against English rule in Ireland. Both sides intervened in the French Wars of Religion (1562-98), with the English supporting the Huguenots (Protestants) and the Spanish, the Catholics.

The defeat of the Armada is not the key moment in the road to England's naval supremacy that it is cracked up to be. In 1589, the English launched an Armada of their own. Led by Drake and Sir John Norris, its aims were to destroy ships in northern Spain, land at Lisbon in order to raise a Portuguese revolt and, finally, to seize the Azores. It achieved none of these tasks and limped home having lost 40 ships. In fact, the Spanish navy emerged stronger than ever. In 1595, the Spanish raided Cornwall and, in the two subsequent years, Philip launched two more armadas, although both were driven back by storms. Hostilities eventually ended with the 1604 Treaty of London, in which Spain recognised the English Protestant monarchy and England ended its support for the Dutch rebellion.

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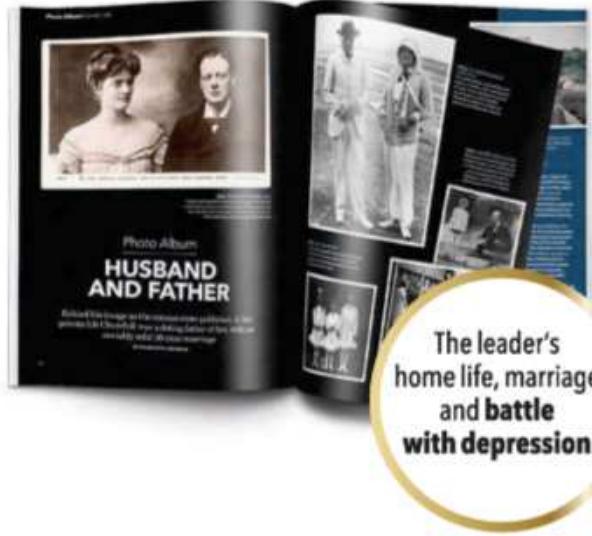
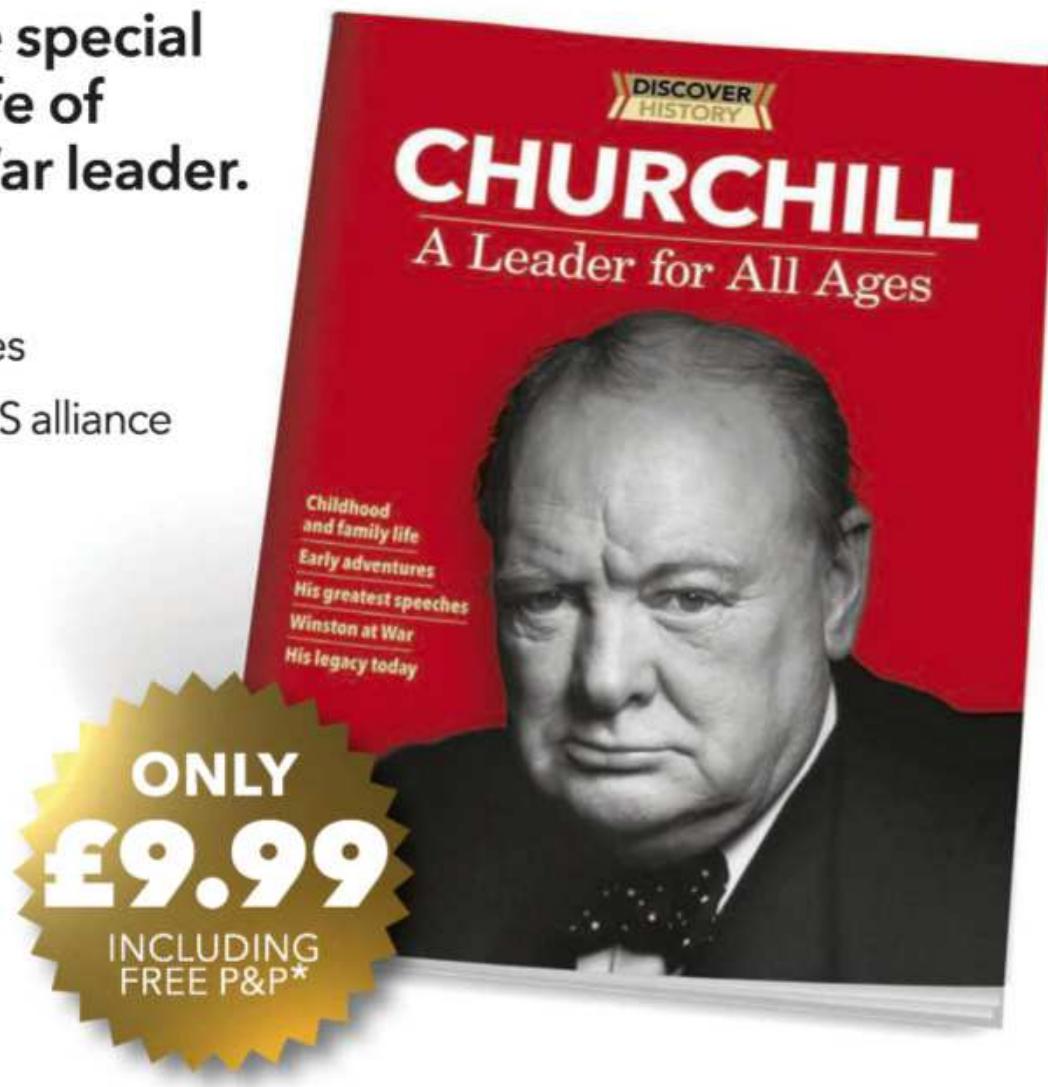
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